3.2. RECREATION AND TRAILS

Outdoor recreation provides valuable quality-of-life benefits to Montanans and citizens throughout the United States. It contributes to the health and well-being of individuals and communities of all types. Benefits include social bonding with friends or family, and mental and physical conditioning which contribute to emotional well-being. According to a national study, two-thirds of the American public engages in some type of outdoor recreation at least several times a month (Roper, Starch 2000). This same study suggests that outdoor recreation also plays a positive role in improving education and environmental awareness, and in reducing childhood obesity, juvenile crime, underage drinking, and illegal drug use.

It has long been established that nonmotorized fitness activities such as running, hiking, skiing, and biking provide long term health benefits to those who participate. However, in 2007, York University in Toronto, Canada conducted a series of studies exploring the quality of life and mental and physical functioning of off-highway vehicle (OHV) riders ((Health & Fitness Journal of Canada 3.1 (2010)). Research pointed towards higher levels of physical functioning, vitality, general happiness, and quality of life for recreational off-highway vehicle riders as a consequence of participation in the sport. Additionally, operating these OHVs is physically demanding as well as mentally challenging.

The changing complexion of the aging population indicates those over 65 are living longer. Fitness activities and enjoying the outdoors provide the physical activity needed for good health and mental stability for the aging population. However, the outdoor recreation demands for the aging population are unknown as this unique situation has not been experienced by managers of recreation and natural resources in the past. More users are looking for easy day use activities of all types, and have voiced concern about the accessibility of road and trail opportunities on the Forest. Evolving technology that allows people to traverse portions of public land that were inaccessible ten years ago, along with increasing personal wealth and spare time, contribute to growing issues surrounding travel management on public lands (USDA 2003a). The Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) echoes several of these issues, and notes that the continued access to, and maintenance of, rural and backcountry trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and OHVs and snowmobiles is a concern across the state, as well as noting a shortfall in the available miles and maintenance of urban and rural trails (Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks 2003).

In the past, use in the Bitterroot Valley was once timber, mining, and ranching related. The last 20 years has brought land owners who see the area as a recreation destination. This has brought a different type of recreational user into the community, one with more disposable income and time for both motorized and nonmotorized recreation. In summer and winter months, recent changes and advances in technology have led to motorized machines that can go places not accessible several years ago. Increases in motorized use have led to a demand for allocated use areas so both motorized and nonmotorized users can enjoy their sport.

3.2.1 SCOPE OF ANALYSIS AND ANALYSIS METHODS

This section addresses the potential effects of the Travel Management Planning Project on summer and over-snow motorized and nonmotorized use. The analysis area for the Travel Management Planning Project is the Bitterroot National Forest outside of Designated Wilderness. Issues surrounding the way people recreate on public lands have been growing as populations increase and more people with divergent interests compete for finite recreation resources.

The best mix of recreation opportunities in the analysis area, including motorized and nonmotorized recreational travel, varies depending on legal constraints, physical character of the mountain ranges themselves, and by the backgrounds, interests, and personal beliefs of different Forest users.

The scope of this analysis is to determine the effects of proposed changes to summer and winter motorized and nonmotorized routes and motorized and nonmotorized over-snow acres on the Bitterroot National

Forest. Analysis methods include the use of Forest Service databases and geographic information system (GIS) coverage for road and trail information, as well as information from the public. Database numbers are supported by on-the-ground trail surveys using a measuring wheel. Trail management objectives were reviewed and signed off by District Rangers for all trails. Details on individual trails are available in the trail folders at the West Fork Ranger Station.

3.2.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

A. Laws and Forest Service Manual Direction

- Federal laws, regulations, and policy that guide road and trail management of the Bitterroot National Forest are:
- National Trails System Act of 1968 (P.L.90-543), (82 Stat.919, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1241 (Note), 1241-1249. The act establishes a National Trail System containing national recreation, scenic, historic, and connecting or side trails for the purpose of providing trail recreation opportunities. It also encourages the use of volunteers in the trail program.
- National Forest Roads and Trails Act (78 Stat.1089, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 532-538). This act recognizes that construction and maintenance of an adequate system of roads and trails within and near National Forests is essential to meeting the increasing demands for timber, recreation, and other uses.
- Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1978, as amended (23 U.S.C.101a, 201-204; P.L.95-599). This act establishes criteria for Forest highways and defines Forest roads and Forest development roads and trails.
- 36 CFR 261 (provides the current legal foundation for restricting different uses and occupancy of the National Forests).
- Forest Service Manual 2350 (Trail, River and Similar Recreation Activities) and 7723(Trails).
- Forest Service Handbook 2309.18 (Trails Management Handbook).
- Executive Order (E.O.) 11644, as amended by E.O. 11989, and Forest Service Rules in Title 36 CFR 212, which codifies the direction in this executive order.
- Bitterroot Forest Plan- Recreation or Trails, goals, objectives, and standards.
- Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Plan, 2009.
- Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail Comprehensive Plan, 1990.
- Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Comprehensive Plan for Management and Use, USDI, National Park Service, January 1982.
- OHV EIS and decision for Montana, North Dakota and portions of South Dakota, 2001.
- Final 2005 Travel Management Rule. Federal Register Vol. 70, No.216.

The 2005 Travel Management Rule established regulations and policy for managing summer motor vehicle use as a system of designated routes and areas on National Forest System lands (USDA Forest Service 2005c) {Project File folder 'usfs_direction_and_policies_laws,' Project File document DIRECTION-003.pdf}.

B. Bitterroot National Forest Plan

The Bitterroot National Forest Plan provides the foundation for the current travel management plan. The Forest Plan identifies both Forest-wide and management area (MA) goals and standards for recreation management. Forest-wide goals are: "To provide a broad spectrum of recreation experience opportunities" and "Provide a safe trail system that protects soil and water resources" (USDA Forest Service 1987a). Forest-wide and MA standards are described in Section 3.2.5, Consistency with the Forest Plan, Laws, and Regulations.

C. Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is one method of classifying the evidence of human sights and sounds in the natural environment. The ROS was developed in 1986 by the Forest Service, and continues to evolve as a way of describing a variety of recreation opportunities (USDA Forest Service 1986). The ROS aids in the planning of recreation sites and facilities by providing the background for each type of recreation setting.

The ROS categories are urban, rural, roaded natural, semi-primitive motorized, semi-primitive nonmotorized, and primitive. They indicate the type of use and experience a user can expect to have in various settings, and are based on the following principles:

- Ø People purposely choose settings for their recreation activities
- Ø Choices are made with expectation of achieving a particular recreation experience, and
- Ø From a planning perspective, managers desire to present a desirable spectrum of recreation settings and activities from which to choose

The Forest Plan objective for ROS is to maintain 50 percent in wilderness/semi-primitive nonmotorized, 20 percent in semi-primitive motorized, and 20 percent in roaded natural. Additional information is located in the {Project File folder 'recreation,' Project File document REC-070.pdf}.

D. Travel Management Direction

The Bitterroot National Forest's Visitor Map (2005) displays motorized travel management restrictions, established under current Federal laws and regulations, on National Forest System land.

The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management issued a decision in January 2001 to limit or restrict motorized wheeled cross-country travel on lands administered by the two agencies in Montana, North Dakota, and portions of South Dakota (USDI/USDA Forest Service 2001b). The decision, referred to as the 2001 Tri-State Decision, restricts yearlong, motorized wheeled cross-country travel where it was not already restricted. A forest plan amendment and special order were completed for the Bitterroot National Forest, and signs were placed across the Forest by July 1, 2001. The Tri-State Decision notes that site-specific planning is the process that would result in the designation of road and trails for their appropriate use. This Travel Management Planning Project would designate such routes for their appropriate use.

The Forest, with involvement from user groups, mapped user-created (unauthorized) motorized routes, although it is not a complete inventory: "The Department [USDA Forest Service] disagrees that a complete inventory of user-created routes is required in order to complete the designation process...A complete inventory would be very time consuming and expensive, delaying completion of route designation" {Project File folder 'usfs_direction_and_policies_laws,' Project File document DIRECTION-003.pdf; p. 68269}. Since 2002 the Forest has had an OHV Ranger primarily funded through State trail grant funds, numerous Forest Protection Officers, and two Law Enforcement Officers who enforce current travel management orders. There is not one hundred percent assurance of compliance to this or any order; however, the Forest has had good success in monitoring and restricting unauthorized OHV use (USDA Forest Service 1991 – 20013 Monitoring and Evaluation reports, Item 28) {Project File folder 'forest_plan_and _monitoring,' Project File documents FPMON-005.pdf to FPMON-025.pdf, 030-031, and 033-036.pdf}, and {Project File folder 'recreation,' Project File document REC-071.pdf}. In addition, year-end summary reports filed by the OHV Ranger show improvement over the years with this presence in the field {Project File documents REC-072.pdf to REC-076.pdf, and REC-078.pdf}. When adverse environmental effects are occurring from OHV use, local managers have the ability to immediately close the road, trail, or area and/or rehabilitate the damage and have done so.

In 2005 the Forest Service published new implementing regulations for motorized recreation: 36 CFR Parts 212, 251, 261, and 295: Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use, Final

Rule (*Federal Register* 2005: 70 FR 68264), which replaced the previous regulations. This rule, known as the 2005 Travel Management Rule, recognized that "Motor vehicles are a legitimate and appropriate way for people to enjoy their National Forests – in the right places, and with proper management. Current regulations at 36 CFR, part 295, which provide for allowing, restricting, or prohibiting motor vehicle travel, were developed when OHVs [off highway vehicles] were less widely available, less powerful, and less capable than today's models. The growing popularity and capabilities of OHVs demand new regulations, so that the Forest Service can continue to provide these opportunities while sustaining the health of National Forest System lands and resources. However, the magnitude and intensity of motor vehicle use have increased to the point that the intent of E.O. [Executive Order] 11644 and E.O 11989 cannot be met while still allowing unrestricted cross-country travel. Soil erosion, water quality, and wildlife habitat are affected. Some National Forest visitors report that their ability to enjoy quiet recreational experiences is affected by visitors using motor vehicles…The agency must strike an appropriate balance in managing all types of recreational activities. To this end, a designated system of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use, established with public involvement, would enhance public enjoyment of the National Forests while maintaining other important values and uses on NFS lands" (*Federal Register* 2005, 68264-5) {Project File document DIRECTION-003.pdf}.

The 2005 Travel Management Rule changed the legal authority for regulating off-route travel by designating routes and areas for motor vehicles. The rule mandates that all national forests complete a travel management review for summer motorized road and trail uses, identify the appropriate class of vehicles for use on specific roads and trails, and specifically designate which routes are open to motor vehicles. Implementation of the 2005 Travel Management Rule is accomplished once a forest has completed travel management revision through a public process, and published a motor vehicle use map (MVUM) (36 CFR 212.56).

According to the terms of a 2007 settlement agreement between various entities and the US Forest Service regarding the Agency's management of Montana's Wilderness Study Areas, "The Forest Service agrees to use its good faith best effort to issue travel management decisions (including decisions covering both winter and summer use) for all WSAs [wilderness study areas] by December 31, 2009" {Project File folder 'public involvement_pre-nepa_2005-09_2007,' Project File document PUBLIC-064.pdf}. While not required by the settlement agreement to include winter use outside of WSAs, or by the 2005 Travel Management Rule to include nonmotorized or mechanical transport uses, the analysis was expanded to include these uses as well.

To meet the intent of the settlement agreement, the Responsible Official decided to include over-snow vehicle use in the Travel Management Planning Project so that all suitable areas, routes, and seasons for their operation can be provided as envisioned in the Bitterroot Forest Plan.

The ID Team utilized a screening process, for both summer and over-snow use, which was developed to be consistent with the criteria for designation of roads, trails and areas, contained in Section, §212.55 of the 2005 Travel Management Rule, as described below:

§ 212.55 (a) - General criteria for designation of National Forest System roads, National Forest trails, and areas on National Forest System lands:

"…the responsible official shall consider effects on National Forest System natural and cultural resources, public safety, provision of recreational opportunities, access needs, conflicts among uses, the need for maintenance and administration of roads, trails, and areas that would arise if the uses under consideration are designated; and the availability of resources for that maintenance and administration."

§ 212.55 (b) Specific criteria for designation of trails and areas:

"…the responsible official shall consider effects on the following, with the objective of minimizing:

1. Damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, and other forest resources;

2. Harassment of wildlife and significant disruption of wildlife habitats;
3. Conflicts between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational uses of National Forest System lands or neighboring Federal lands; and
4. Conflicts among different classes of motor vehicle uses of National Forest System lands or neighboring Federal lands."

For additional information, please refer to Chapter 1 and {Project File folder 'process,' Project File document PROCESS-001.pdf: Process for Selecting Routes to be Considered for Travel Designation Changes in the Travel Management Planning Project action, DEIS, and FEIS/ROD}.

Until route designations are completed and over-snow areas identified for the Forest, and a MVUM and over-snow vehicle use map (OSVUM) are published, existing travel management policies, restrictions, and orders remain in effect (USDA Forest Service 2005c). Motorized vehicle changes would be implemented under 36 CFR 261 regulations and special orders until a MVUM is published.

3.2.3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Bitterroot National Forest is located in western Montana, and can be described as mountainous terrain over 9,000 feet that host spectacular alpine-glaciated peaks that cap the Bitterroot Mountain Range. The Forest is a fire-influenced system which has an impact on the recreational use in the wilderness and backcountry. The far western portion of the Forest crosses into Idaho and borders the Salmon-Challis National Forest; the southeastern border of the Forest is adjacent to the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest; the northeastern border with the Lolo National Forest; and the northwestern border to the Clearwater-Nez Perce National Forest.

The Bitterroot National Forest is predominantly a locally-used forest with the majority of recreational users coming from Ravalli County followed by those coming from Missoula County, as referenced in the National Visitor Use Monitoring Report (USDA Forest Service. 2009c.) Most users live within these two counties and the Bitterroot Valley, and recreate and play here. The area provides numerous hiking trails, mile-upon-mile of cold-water streams, and relatively easy access to backcountry and wilderness settings, as well as developed recreation sites.

The Forest provides wilderness experiences through the Frank Church-River of No Return, Selway-Bitterroot, and Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness areas. These areas provide backcountry opportunities for remote solitude on over a thousand miles of trails. River and road corridors offer expansive views of the entire Forest, and provide access to historic cabins, Wilderness areas, and a backcountry of roadless forested mountains. Several trails, including the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, provide a sampling of early-day cultures of the Nez Perce and the Bitterroot Salish Tribes, as well as early explorers, including Lewis and Clark.

Roads and trails provide access to the Bitterroot National Forest. Roads are used to access areas for hunting, berry picking, fishing, camping (developed and dispersed), driving for pleasure, firewood gathering, and Christmas tree harvesting. They also provide access to trails for use by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), motorcycles, horseback, bike, and by foot. Roads offer easy access, year-round, to a variety of forest-based activities, and allow for year-round viewing of the Forest's abundant wildlife including big horn sheep, elk, moose, and whitetail deer.

Trails allow visitors to access the backcountry for fishing, photography, and viewing scenery, visiting lakes, exercise, and many more activities. The type, amount, and location of motorized routes influence motorized recreation opportunities and the quality of the recreation experience. Motorized routes provide opportunities for users of single and double track vehicles to enjoy the Forest at their own pace and challenge levels at various elevations while enjoying the scenic beauty of the area. Nonmotorized routes provide opportunities for mountain biking, horseback riding, and hiking/backpacking that would be free from motorized interactions on trails to meet safety concerns, or provide for the desire for solitude, free

from machine noise and exhaust smells. The type, amount, and location of nonmotorized trails influence nonmotorized recreation opportunities and the quality of the recreation experience.

In contrast to the primitive backcountry and wilderness face of the Forest, Lake Como Recreation Area provides a highly developed recreation complex for boating, developed camping, horseback riding, fishing, swimming, and hiking opportunities. Although Painted Rocks Lake is less developed than Lake Como, it provides a secondary outlet for flat water boating and recreational experiences in the Valley. Use by motor boat, jet-ski, and canoe/kayaks has been increasing over the last several years.

Firewood and Christmas tree cutting along roads is common, and some northern creek drainages experience localized, concentrated use. Downhill skiing occurs at Lost Trail Recreation Area, and cross-country skiing takes place at Chief Joseph Pass and Lake Como.

The Forest was identified as a local, easily-accessible forest. There are a small number of non-local visitors that either visit on their own or through the 72 outfitters and guides permitted to operate on the Forest where commercially-guided hunting, riding, rafting, and fishing adventures are provided to the public and which capitalize on the extensive trail system, good hunting opportunities, and peoples' desire to recreate in a wild backcountry setting.

A. Recreation Niche

In 2007, National Forests were asked to identify their "niche," essentially how they identified with outdoor recreation. The Bitterroot National Forest identified its recreation niche as "Our Wild Backyard," described below:

"Scenic mountains, rugged canyons, wild rivers, Wilderness, and wildlife are all just outside your backyard on the Forest. Over one thousand miles of trails and routes provide easy access to areas of solitude and beauty. Many were carved in by indigenous people and early explorers and are an experience in themselves, connecting today's users to the past. The mountains of the Forest would always provide a scenic backdrop and thus a component of the quality of life in the Bitterroot Valley. Scenery pulls you in and trails lead the way for daily renewal as well as challenging excursions deep into the Wilderness."

The niche describes settings, values, and special places as well as activities, opportunities, and experiences associated with the setting. The niche was drafted for use as a tool designed to provide specific guidance to align the developed sites recreation program with the Forest's recreation niche for the coming decade. The Forest considered management issues such as 1) How would the setting be managed to support the niche emphasis; 2) To what degree is the setting appropriate for location of developed sites; 3) How does this site help meet the intent of the niche emphasis; 4) Key activities in support of the niche emphasis for the coming decade; and 5) Programmatic information strategies to utilize in the developed site program to help achieve the niche emphasis over the next ten years.

B. Bitterroot National Forest Recreation Use Information

The National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) survey process was designed to better understand recreation use occurring on National Forest System lands (Kocis et al. 2003). Three rounds of NVUM surveys have been conducted on the Bitterroot National Forest: October 2001 through September 2002 (Round 1), October 2006 through September 2007 (Round 2), and October 2011 through September 2012 (Round 3). A final report of the Round 1 and 2 survey findings was published in August 2008 (English et al. 2009). Examples of information provided in the report include: 1) total number of visits; 2) participation rates; and 3) user satisfaction. The final report for Round 3 is not available.

Caution should be used when trying to compare Round 1 and 2 sets of NVUM data because significant improvements were made in the Round 2 sampling survey in order to 1) improve accuracy and consistency of the definitions, and 2) the scope and range of locations and times selected for data collection were modified in Round 2, to ensure that all types of recreation visitation across the Forest and throughout the sample year were represented. Therefore, it is inaccurate to assume that the two sets of data indicate any

type of trend, as trends are usually based on having at least four pieces of information collected in the same method.

"The first round of NVUM was a new approach to measuring visitation on National Forest lands. Simply going through the NVUM process for the first time enabled forest staff to increase their understanding and do an improved job the second time. Better training processes and reporting tools are additional factors that contributed to NVUM improvements. These improvements have greatly enhanced the validity of all aspects of the NVUM results. It is possible that the changes account for a large portion of the differences in results between the two rounds of data" {Project File document REC-062.pdf}.

Given that there were changes made between Round 1 and Round 2, the NVUM surveys provide the best data available for the activities surveyed while providing valuable information such as the majority of visitors to the Forest are local and recreate within 50 miles of their home. This pattern is typical when compared to other forests. The most common activities visitors come to the Forest for are hiking/walking and hunting. A large percentage of visitors prefer to relax, view the scenery and wildlife and natural features during their hiking, walking and hunting excursions. Many also drive for pleasure while they are here for other reasons.

The following table, Table 3.2-1, presents participation rates by activity for the Bitterroot National Forest during Rounds 1 and 2 NVUM survey periods. The Percent Participation column of the table presents the participation rates by activity and may exceed 100 percent since visitors may participate in multiple activities. According to the 2007 NVUM survey, those using the Forest are very satisfied with their visit overall.

Table 3.2- 1: NVUM Results for Bitterroot National Forest (Rounds 1 and 2)

	Round 1, FY 2001		**Round 2, FY 2007**		
Activity	**Percent Of Visitors Who Participated In This Activity**	**Percent Who Said It Was Their Primary Activity**	**Percent Of Visitors Who Participated In This Activity**	**Percent Who Said It Was Their Primary Activity**	**Average Hours Spent In Primary Activity**
Camping in developed sites	6.9	4.1	6.8	4.0	33.0
Primitive camping	3.5	1.8	0.6	0.0	50.2
Backpacking	5.0	3.1	4.6	3.4	14.7
Resort Use	1.1	0.8	1.3	0.4	23.8
Picnicking	7.5	1.9	7.2	1.1	12.9
Viewing wildlife, birds, fish, etc	40.7	2.2	58.3	3.4	4.0
Viewing natural features (scenery)	41.7	5.0	73.8	6.5	2.0
Nature Study	4.7	0.7	6.1	0.0	.
Relaxing	44.1	5.2	60.0	4.2	5.1
Fishing	8.0	2.6	6.4	1.7	6.7
Hunting	16.8	16.1	10.2	10.2	7.5
OHV use	3.3	0.3	2.6	0.9	3.0
Driving for pleasure	12.3	3.7	29.7	6.3	1.8
Snowmobile travel	0.2	0.0	7.6	7.6	5.0
Motorized water travel	0.6	0.1	0.5	0.3	3.9
Other motorized activities	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Hiking or walking	47.6	28.4	66.4	36.4	3.3

	Round 1, FY 2001		Round 2, FY 2007		
Activity	**Percent Of Visitors Who Participated In This Activity**	**Percent Who Said It Was Their Primary Activity**	**Percent Of Visitors Who Participated In This Activity**	**Percent Who Said It Was Their Primary Activity**	**Average Hours Spent In Primary Activity**
Horseback riding	8.0	5.9	7.5	6.6	2.9
Bicycling	1.2	0.1	2.6	2.0	2.5
Nonmotorized water travel	0.5	0.3	1.1	0.1	2.7
Downhill skiing or snowboarding	7.0	6.9	0.1	0.1	5.1
X-C skiing, snow shoeing	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.0	4.2
Other non-motor activity (swim, etc.)	3.6	1.2	1.7	0.9	2.3
Gathering forest products mushrooms, berries, firewood, etc.	5.2	1.2	6.2	2.5	3.0
Motorized Trail Activity	NA	NA	4.3	1.7	4.0

Driving for pleasure accounts for the majority of motorized use on the Forest based on visitors who participated in the activity. Although some of the visitors interviewed used OHVs while on the Forest, a small percentage came specifically for that reason. In all, OHV motorized activity amounted to about 16.5 percent of recreational use on the Forest according to 2007 data. Nationally, OHV motorized uses amount to about 11 percent, with about 6 percent coming to primarily participate in motorized activities (USDA Forest Service 2009c).

C. Recreation Setting

Recreation typically falls into two categories: developed or dispersed recreation.

Developed Recreation

Developed recreation occurs in sites such as campgrounds, group sites, and trailheads where facilities, including restrooms, camping sites, picnic pavilions, and swimming beaches, have been developed for the use and enjoyment of the recreating public, usually where a fee is required.

Dispersed Recreation

Dispersed recreation occurs outside of developed facilities where a fee is not required; however, toilet facilities or parking areas, such as trailheads, are sometimes provided at dispersed sites for health and safety reasons. Types of dispersed recreation activities that occur on the Forest include hunting, bike riding, hiking, backpacking, driving for pleasure, horseback riding, bird watching, firewood gathering, picnicking, OHV (ATV, trail bike, snowmobile) riding, viewing scenery, cross-country skiing, and camping.

D. Hunting

Big-game hunting is one of the primary recreation activities on the Forest. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) administers hunting within Montana. Hunting locations vary somewhat depending on the game species. Motorized routes provide hunters with access to more remote areas where they can park their OHV and other vehicles and walk further into the forest, while other hunters may choose to hunt along or near motorized routes.

E. The Elderly or Disabled Population

Those with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in programs that are open to all. Federal agencies are not required to fundamentally alter programs to facilitate such participation. All people, including the elderly or those with disabilities, may use their motor vehicles on roads, trails, and areas designated for such use and identified on the MVUM. Restrictions on motorized use that are applied consistently to everyone are not discriminatory {Project File document REC-077}.

In comments and responses on the 2005 Travel Management Rule, the Agency states, "Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, no person with a disability can be denied participation in a Federal program that is available to all other people solely because of his or her disability. In conformance with Section 504, wheelchairs are welcome on all National Forest System lands that are open to foot travel and are specifically exempt from the definition of motor vehicle in §212.1 of the 2005 Travel Management Rule, even if they are battery-powered. However, there is no legal requirement to allow people with disabilities to use OHVs or other motor vehicles on roads, trails, and areas closed to motor vehicle use because such an exemption could fundamentally alter the nature of the Forest Service's travel management program (7 CFR 12e.103). Reasonable restrictions on motor vehicle use, applied consistently to everyone, are not discriminatory." This concept also applies to providing special provisions for aging populations that may have limited mobility.

Currently, 54 million people in the United States have a disability that limits one or more of their major life activities, and that number is growing (USDA Forest Service 2006a).

F. Motorized Wheeled Vehicle Use for Dispersed Camping

National Forests have historically permitted motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping outside of developed campgrounds. This popular type of use typically occurs adjacent to or at the end of National Forest System roads and trails, close to water, or at the termini of a network of unauthorized routes. Camping close or next to water is appealing for several reasons, including easy access for fishing; convenience in obtaining water for cooking, drinking, and washing; experiencing the soothing sounds of flowing water; and generally lower temperatures. Motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping is considered an important recreational opportunity on the Bitterroot National Forest. Dispersed sites are typically user-created with no facilities or improved access. However, some sites may have improved parking areas to minimize resource damage. The popularity of dispersed camping away from developed facilities has increased considerably since recreational vehicles have become more self-reliant with potable water and sewage holding tanks.

Existing dispersed sites typically have a suitable motorized access route commonly used to get to the site. There are motorized wheeled vehicle access routes to dispersed camping areas that have received historic use with minimal impacts. However, there have been motorized vehicle routes created to some dispersed campsites that have resulted in resource damage. In some cases, it is the motorized vehicle use to the site that has caused resource damage, in other cases; it is the dispersed camping activity that has caused resource damage. Resource damage can be minimized by hardening the access route and parking area with gravel to prevent surface erosion, or defining the parking area with large boulders. Motorized vehicle use to dispersed campsites along the Lost Horse Corridor has been defined with large boulders and hardened with gravel parking areas to minimize stream bank erosion from vehicles parking too close to the creek. Impacts associated with dispersed campsites located along Skalkaho and Skalkaho Rye Creek have also been mitigated by placing large boulders and defining parking areas to keep vehicles off the stream banks. This mitigation activity has minimized resource concerns while allowing the public to enjoy these areas. Future monitoring of riparian areas will indicate where additional mitigation measures are necessary.

Forest Service Manual (FSM) 7715.74 indicates that the Responsible Official may choose to designate motorized access to dispersed camping sites. FSM 7716.1.3 further instructs that designations for motorized vehicle access for dispersed camping must specify the distance, vehicle class, and the time of

year the use is permitted if appropriate, and any other conditions on the use. Conditions of Use for the purpose of this travel planning process would include:

- Ø User should utilize the most obvious route on the ground to an existing campsite
- Ø Motorized access to an existing dispersed campsite is only intended for access to the campsite, not for repetitive recreational riding
- Ø Vehicles should stay within the existing disturbed area at the campsite and park at least 30 feet from water
- Ø Do not cross streams and do not pass signs, barriers, rocks, or obstructions placed to stop vehicle use
- Ø Vehicle class for motorized wheeled vehicle access to dispersed camping includes vehicles such as pickup or car capable of pulling a trailer, recreational vehicles, and OHVs
- Ø Dispersed camping stay limit is 16 days on the Bitterroot National Forest
- Ø Time of year the use is permitted would be year round, providing no resource damage has occurred on the motorized vehicle access route
- Ø The Forest has the ability to close any motorized wheeled access route leading to a dispersed campsite to mitigate resource damage

Motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping is currently allowed within 300 feet (600 foot corridor) of motorized routes (system or non-system routes) on the Bitterroot National Forest under the Tri-State Decision of 2001. Many of the locations where motorized access to desirable dispersed camping areas could be created by the public have been established by repeated use. Motorized access for dispersed camping is often limited by terrain features, such as standing and down trees, large rocks, thick vegetation, water features, abrupt topographic changes, and narrow stream canyons, as well as management tools, such as the use of gravel for hardening access routes and parking areas, and large boulders to define parking areas to minimize stream bank erosion.

Motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping is permitted on most areas of the Forest, including inventoried roadless areas (IRA), recommended wilderness, and wilderness study areas; it is not allowed in Designated Wilderness.

Several exemptions which allow motorized wheeled cross-country travel where it is currently restricted include:

- Ø Military, fire, search and rescue, and law enforcement vehicles used for emergency purposes;
- Ø Administrative use for official Forest management activities;
- Ø Permitted administrative use by other government agencies on official administrative business;
- Ø Permitted use for lessees and permittees in association with a federal lease or permit

Management direction for the Magruder Corridor, which incorporates a 101-mile primitive road between the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, is contained in the Central Idaho Wilderness Act of 1980 (P.L.96-312). It details where the edge or boundary of the Wilderness is for the length of the corridor. This width varies throughout the entire corridor, from as narrow as 66 feet from center line near Hells Half Acre to a width of 300 feet. For this reason, there would be an exception to the rule to limit motorized access to camping to the current existing sites within the Magruder Corridor and not allow new camps to be established even if they are within the 300 feet of center line as the Rule states.

In 1999, a survey conducted of dispersed campsites on the Bitterroot National Forest indicated there were approximately 335 located across the Forest {Project File document REC-055.pdf}. These numbers do not include developed recreation sites such as campgrounds, trailheads, or day use sites.

In 2007, 106 of the 335 sites were surveyed on the Darby, Sula, and West Fork Ranger Districts {Project File document REC-056}. Findings indicated that 11 of the 106 sites were larger identified dispersed areas that could accommodate relatively large groups of people or multiple smaller groups.

The remaining 95 sites mapped indicated that:

- 80 of the 95 sites (84 percent) were less than 150 feet in length from a designated route
- 24 of the 95 sites (25 percent) were graveled
- 11 of the 95 sites (12 percent) were defined by boulders or fences
- 6 of the 95 (6 percent) had a sign
- 53 of the 95 (56 percent) had rock or metal fire rings

In addition, during the Travel Management Planning Project process, the Ranger Districts identified 20 dispersed camping areas as shown on the maps of the alternatives that are greater than 150 and 300 feet from a designated route, including the 11 identified sites mentioned above. These are important from a recreation experience standpoint as they have historically been used by Forest visitors by providing a group camping opportunity outside of developed campgrounds. They typically have well-established two track routes leading to the sites and are not causing resource damage.

In 2011, the Forest inventoried, including fire rings and parking areas, resource damage, proximity to streams or water, and degree of erosion, and digitally mapped 159 dispersed campsites. An additional 104 sites were inventoried and mapped during 2013.

Field observations indicate that dispersed camping and group camping are connected. Dispersed users typically revisit the same site season after season, and it is a common observation to see multiple recreational vehicles camped together in one location. Another common observation is to see OHV use at dispersed campsites. Although a small number of OHV vehicles might be associated with a group, visitors often take turns going out to ride trails, access fishing, visit friends camping nearby, and collect firewood. However, not every camp has an OHV, as there are several people who like to disperse camp with their recreational vehicles, and be away from the noise and dust that might accompany OHV use.

G. Special Use Permits

Special use permits or easements authorize use of National Forest System lands. Types of use associated with a permit or easement include access to private property, utility easements, cattle grazing, outfitting and guiding, and recreation activities. Applications are analyzed through processes associated with individual requests, and will not be addressed in this travel planning document.

Developed Ski Area

There is one developed ski area within the boundaries of the Forest: Lost Trail Powder Mountain. Lost Trail Powder Mountain downhill ski area has been in operation for approximately 75 years, and operates under a special use permit authorizing winter operations. This permitted area is located at Lost Trail Pass off Highway 93 on the Idaho-Montana border. No changes to the ski area permit are proposed in this analysis process. Any proposals for changes from the existing permit would go through the ski area master development planning process as well as site-specific environmental analysis. The Lost Trail Powder Mountain ski area is closed to motorized vehicles through a Forest Special Order. This travel planning process would designate the Lost Trail Powder Mountain closure order permanently.

H. National Forest Trail System

There are approximately 1,343 miles of system trails on the Forest, with about 750 miles within Designated Wilderness and about 593 miles outside of Designated Wilderness areas. Most system trails were developed in the early part of the 20th century; some follow historic travel routes that predate the Forest. Early trails were used to facilitate transportation by pack string or on foot, primarily for transportation or for work but not necessarily for recreation. Trails accessed fire lookouts, dams, mining claims, grazing

allotments, administrative sites, outfitter camps, and remote locations for firefighting. They were also used to service telephone lines between lookouts. Several trails originally traversed the entire Forest to access distant locations such as Thunder Mountain, Blodgett, and Nee-Me-Poo trails.

Originally, trails were not constructed to today's standards. They often amounted to the shortest cleared route between two points. Erosion, mud bogs, and steep grades were less of a concern because the trails were lightly used, and with an emphasis on less local and more distant destinations. Every visitor to the National Forest has an idea of what they expect a "trail" to look like.

Few trails have been removed from the Forest's trail system, but several have started to blend into the landscape due to lack of use, or are getting almost no use. These include trails that are remote or trails that access non-functional dams, abandoned phone lines, or have rough topography, little scenery, or game. Some trails crossing private property have more limited access, have been obliterated by timber harvest or have fallen into disuse. Some trails fell into disuse after road construction or fire. A few trails are still in the system but have a missing middle segment obliterated by logging.

Several popular, low-elevation trails were built or improved on the Forest in recent decades for purposes such as horse riding, mountain biking, nature study, exercise, or handicap access. Trails that specifically benefit those with disabilities are the paved portion of the Como Lake Trail #502 or the accessible trail at Bass Creek #390.

The following definitions of trails apply to those on National Forest System lands: Forest Service Definitions (36 CFR §212.1)

- **Trail**: A route 50 inches or less in width or a route over 50 inches wide that is identified and managed as a trail.
- **Forest trail**: A trail wholly or partly within or adjacent to and serving the National Forest System that the Forest Service determines is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the National Forest System and the use and development of its resources.
- **National Forest System trail**: A forest trail other than a trail which has been authorized by a legally document right-of-way held by a State, county or other public road authority.

Some system trails begin as road width at the trailhead but soon narrow down to trail width. At least six system trails have been widened over the years to provide access for equipment to dams, such as Tin Cup Trail #96. At least one system trail was widened to provide access for mining exploration. The tread on parts of some system trails has been widened by uncontrolled ATV use, such as Chain of Lakes Trail #39, Faith Lake Trail #421, Shook Mtn. Trail #601, Weasel Creek Trail #156, Good Creek Ridge Trail #43, and Sleeping Child-Divide Trail #104.

Currently on the Bitterroot National Forest there are 1,068 miles of trails in the analysis area, as shown in Table 3.2-2, below. Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) codes describe the type of vehicle permitted on the trail, and indicate whether the trail is open yearlong or seasonally.

Table 3.2- 2: Trails in the Analysis Area

MVUM Code	Status	Number of Miles
7	Trail[1] open to vehicles 50" or less in width – yearlong	110
8	Trail[1] open to vehicles 50" or less in width – seasonally	550
9	Trail open to motorcycles – yearlong	330

MVUM Code	Status	Number of Miles
10	Trail open to motorcycles – seasonally	78
Total		**1,068**

[1]Most of these trails are roads closed to full size vehicles, but open to ATVs and motorcycles; these are known as "coincident routes." Please refer to Section 3.2.3 K for additional information.

The following table, Table 3.2-3, shows the categories of seasonal use corresponding to MVUM codes 8 and 10.

Table 3.2- 3: MVUM Codes and Season of Use

MVUM Code	Season of Use
8	04/01 – 11/30 06/16 – 08/31 06/16 – 10/14 12/02 – 10/14
10	04/01 – 11/30 06/16 – 10/14 12/02 – 10/14

Table 3.2-4 lists the reasons for the seasonal restrictions.

Table 3.2- 4: Categories of Seasonal Trail Restrictions

Season of Use	Dates of Restriction	Purpose
04/01-11/30	12/01-03/31	Provide wildlife security during hunting season
06/16-08/31	09/01-06/15	Protect wildlife and provide security during hunting season
06/16-10/14	10/15 – 06/15	Protect wildlife and provide wildlife security during hunting season
12/02-10/14	10/15-12/01	Protect wildlife and provide wildlife security during hunting season

Trail Class

The Forest Service manages its trails according to trail management objectives (TMO). These are guidelines for managing each trail on an individual Designed Use Objective. Trail Class (1-5), Designed Use (hike, pack and saddle, bicycle, motorcycle, and ATV), Design Parameters (tread width, clearing limits, and grade), Target Frequency (annual frequency for clearing, tread repair, brush removal, structure maintenance, and condition survey), Managed Use, and Prohibited use help create management objectives.

All the trails on the Bitterroot National Forest have TMOs, and those are located in the trail folders at the West Fork Ranger District.

National Forest System trails are categorized using Trail Classes. Trail Class (FSH 2309.18, Sec. 14.2) is defined as: The prescribed scale of development for a trail, representing its intended design and management standards. The five Trail Classes, ranging from the least developed (Trail Class 1) to the most developed (Trail Class 5) are:

- **Trail Class 1** is the lowest standard trail, and is characterized as a non-constructed way trail. Portions may have little-to-no tread, going through rock or talus, for instance. Location is entirely geography dependent, and trails typically follow ridges and draws. Navigational skills will likely be required between markings. The challenge is typically high. Use is likely to be low; higher volumes of use without a set tread would likely cause unwanted widening and vegetation trampling. Non-applicable for winter trails.
- **Trail Class 2** is a low standard trail with few structures. The challenge is for the most skilled user, and may be inappropriate for the novice users. Location is controlled by the geography keeping cuts and fills to a minimum. Generally capable of supporting only low volumes of use. Higher volumes of use will likely result in rapid trail distress. Structures are infrequent and are used for significant safety risks or resource protection. Centerline gradients are steep and are likely to be continuous over long distances. Blockages are cleared to define the route and protect resources. Vegetation may encroach into the trail way. Winter trails are marked and not groomed.
- **Trail Class 3** is an intermediate-standard trail. Some user convenience is traded for higher challenge. Trail locations are selected as a compromise between user challenge and trail durability, and are likely to have sections of continuous cuts and fills. Trail treads are capable of resisting medium-to-high volumes of use. The challenge is more appropriate to a more skilled user. Structures are used sparingly to eliminate specific user hazards or to protect adjacent resources, and normally not for user convenience or comfort. Surfaces are likely to be irregular, with sections of continuous rocks and roots. Centerline gradients are steeper and may be continuous over long distances. Winter trails are marked with occasionally grooming.
- **Trail Class 4** is a high standard trail capable of providing a high level of service to single or multi-purpose uses. These are normally the main trunk-line trails that lead from the road and trailhead into a major drainage. Trail locations are selected for maximizing route stability for high use, and would likely require continuous cuts and fills. Trail treads are designed and maintained to resist high volumes of use. The challenge is appropriate for even the novice user. Structures are freely used to stabilize the tread, protect adjacent resources, maximize user safety, and enhance user comfort. Surfaces are highly maintained to minimize large rocks and roots, and may be surfaced. Centerline gradients are gentle with some steeper pitches. Winter trails are frequently groomed.
- **Trail Class 5** is a fully developed and typically paved trail, and accessible with needed structures like bridges, handrails, curbs, etc. Trail locations are selected to maximize user convenience and comfort. Tread is single lane, with frequent turnouts where traffic volume is low-to-moderate. Tread is double lane where traffic is moderate-to-high. Obstacles are not present. Grades are typically < 8 percent. Non-applicable for winter trails.

Trail Classes are primarily assigned based on the management intent of the Forest Plan, travel management decisions, trail-specific decisions, and other related direction. Assignment of trail class usually considers the use the trail was designed for, but primarily considers managed uses of the trails. All trails on the Bitterroot National Forest have been assigned to a Trail Class. Of the 1,343 miles of National Forest System trails on the Bitterroot National Forest, the majority of these miles, approximately 65 percent, are categorized as Trail Class 2. This travel management analysis does not propose decisions to modify trail class assignments.

Managed Use indicates the management intent to accommodate a specific use. There can be more than one managed use per trail or trail segment. The Managed Uses for a trail are usually a small subset of all the allowed uses on the trail; that is, uses that are allowed unless specifically prohibited. For example, a trail that is restricted to all motorized use but open to all nonmotorized use would also include bicycles and all other nonmotorized uses. This travel management analysis does propose decisions to modify some Managed Use assignments.

Trail Operation, Maintenance, and Improvements

Recreation is the predominant use of most trails on the Bitterroot National Forest. However, many trails are still important for the uses for which they were originally intended. Regulations require maintenance of the trail system. Trail work is reviewed annually, and trail maintenance is prioritized according to needs across the Forest. These priorities include health and safety concerns, public use, dam, lookout or cabin access, and they can change depending on annual situations. The goal of the trail system is to provide an efficient and economical system of trails for forest access, while minimizing the effects to the resource and providing a high quality recreational experience to the user.

User quality refers to how well the trail meets the needs and desires of the user. Condition of the trail is part of user quality. How well the trail is maintained and constructed to meet user needs are both considerations in user quality. Another consideration is how the trail links with other trails in the system. In other words, does the trail provide a variety of experiences and loops for the user? With 1,343 miles of trails on the Forest, a rotation schedule for trail maintenance and improvements is necessary. Trail maintenance involves the clearing, brushing and opening up of trails and the cleaning of drainage structures such as water bars or rolling dips; a 5-year rotation is now recommended. However, some trails are prioritized for annual maintenance based on user demand and other access needs, with other trails scheduled every 2 to 5 years.

Trails are maintained after the snow melts and until the snow falls. With few exceptions, from November through April, there is no trail maintenance. Trail conditions in winter include packed snow, ice, post-holes, ski tracks, snowshoe tracks, snowmobile tracks, free-of-tracks, or snow-free. Trails may be blocked by winter-fallen trees that limit use well into the summer. Fallen trees may block some trails for years. During springtime, soil-saturated trail tread is vulnerable to accelerated erosion. Use on wet trail tread by horses, ATVs, motorcycles, bicycles, and to a lesser degree, hikers, can cause increased erosion. In many cases, the adjacent vegetation is trampled as users attempt to find firmer ground. Trail braiding commonly occurs early in the season in wet areas, and on fire-affected trails where the route is blocked by downed trees and soil structure is weakened. Most of the current seasonal motorized trail closures are in place to avoid hunting season uses conflicts, not to reduce impacts to wet spring trail tread.

Wildfires, wind events, and floods force changes in priorities for scheduling trail maintenance across the Forest. Approximately 63 percent of the trails on the Forest have been affected by some sort of fire since the late 1990s. After severe wildfires, some trails would require clearing 2-5 times a year. Some trails are not maintained because it is unsafe to work around snags. A combination of user demand and the need to access dams, lookouts, outfitter camps, and administration sites also influences priorities. An increased priority for one trail necessitates a decreased priority for another trail somewhere on the Forest. Maintenance priorities can change on a temporary basis (5-10 years) or they can be more permanent.

Many of the trails prioritized for annual maintenance have also been substantially reconstructed. Capital Investment Projects (CIP) are projects where needs have grown beyond deferred maintenance. These are projects that primarily need attention for health and safety reasons. CIPs will fix trail segments that were originally constructed in a poor location, and reroute them to locations that will be sustainable according to its trail class. Also, bigger new construction projects are considered CIP; examples of these include bridge installments or new trail segments. These help prevent resource damage from accumulating due to high public use. There is a 5-year list for the Forest with financial estimates and NEPA requirements, which is

reviewed and updated annually. When a trail is reconstructed, the entire trail is not rebuilt. Reconstruction is limited to what is needed for the trail at that particular time.

Improvements such as tread reconstruction, water bars, and drain dips are used to reduce erosion. Culverts, hardened ford approaches, and bridges are used to protect water quality. Turnpikes are built in boggy locations to harden the tread and confine trampling impacts. Trail improvements are designed to be compatible with the type of use and the recreational setting. Trail reconstruction improvements are subject to degradation by the same natural processes that affected the original trails. The money used to pay for trail reconstruction represents a long-term investment in each trail.

The 1,343-mile trail system receives a varying amount of maintenance, and in some areas the usable trail system mileage is less due to trails not being logged out and brushed open for a number of years. The miles of trail maintenance accomplished annually is achieved through a combination of contracts, force account crews, volunteers, and partnerships. They include the Bitterroot Back Country Horseman, Selway Pintler Wilderness Back Country Horseman, Bitterroot Backcountry Cyclists, Ravalli County Off Road Vehicle User Association, Bitterroot Ridge Runners, Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation, Montana Wilderness Association, National Smokejumpers Association, and local scout troops. Individuals such as motorcycle, ATV, or stock riders carry saws for trail clearing. Licensed outfitters clear system trails. A portion of outfitter permit fees collected are used to clear National Forest System trails. Currently, annual budgets supporting trail maintenance work are insufficient to maintain all the miles of the Forest's trail system to standard, so prioritizing the work and adjusting that list annually is necessary as budgets, health and safety issues, and resource concerns change.

The following table, Table 3.2-5, shows the miles of trail to be maintained or improved to standard (reconstruction) for the past 7 years by the planned or assigned target, and what was accomplished:

Table 3.2- 5: Miles of Trail Maintained/Improved to Standard 2007-2013

Fiscal Year	Miles Maintained-Planned	Miles Maintained-Accomplished	Miles Improved-Planned	Miles Improved-Accomplished
2007	330	629	6	11
2008	377	383	17	17
2009	380	629	13	13
2010	380	444	13	13
2011	432	638	9	11
2012	456	686	9	31
2013	345	643	7	11

I. Funding for Operation, Maintenance, and Improvements

Forest Service funding for trail operation, maintenance, and improvements is authorized and appropriated by Congress, and fluctuates from year to year. Funding for trail maintenance, improvements, and special projects, such as funding after fires or wind/flood events, mainly come to the Bitterroot National Forest through a variety of funding codes known as budget line items, (BLIs) that change through the years. There is a specific BLI that is intended for trail improvement or operations and maintenance: CMTL. The regional allocation for CMTL is based upon a forest's total miles of trails; the Bitterroot National Forest has about 5.4 percent of the total trail miles in Region 1 and, correspondingly, receives that portion of the

total budget. Of that portion, approximately 60 percent of a Forest's funding will go to operation and maintenance, and 40 percent to CIP that the unit has identified and prioritized.

There are also special BLIs that Regions and Forests compete for annually at the national or regional levels, as well as some miscellaneous funding through project implementation or funding focused for specific trails such as the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The Bitterroot National Forest contains portions of all three trails, and typically receives funding annually to maintain those trails. Also, depending on National Emphasis Items, or special funding due to extensive wildfires or flooding, additional funding has been received from the following sources: Blowdown funding; BAER (Burned Area Emergency Response); Trail, Flood Damage Repair; (CMESTL, Disaster Recovery); Trail Rehabilitation and Restoration (WFW3); Legacy Roads and Trails (CMLG); American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA -received in 2010); Post Fire Rehabilitation and Restoration (NFN3); and Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP - received in 2011-2013). Funding from these sources can come to the Forest as CMTL, but is considered over and above the allocated amount from the region. Depending on the program of work and what is realistic to accomplish with crews on the ground, this funding can be put into agreements and used over multiple years. National Emphasis Items funding varies from year to year, and is not guaranteed. In addition, the Bitterroot National Forest trails program has been successful throughout the years in receiving grant funding from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and Title III of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act through the Ravalli Resource Advisory Committee. Collectively, all of these types of BLIs and grants fund trail improvements, operations, and maintenance tasks or special projects associated with the Forest's Trail System.

The following table, Table 3.2-6, shows funding in CMTL, as well as the additional funding received from other BLIs, grants, or special projects from 2007-2013:

Table 3.2- 6: Bitterroot National Forest Trails System Funding 2007-2013

Annual Funding	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	F 2010[1]	FY 2011[1]	FY 2012[1]	FY 2013
Investments (CIP)	$166,286	$186,000	$183,000	$183,000	$170,000	$161,000	$139,000
Operations and Maintenance	$224,174	$267,000	$320,000	$295,000	$342,000	$318,000	$242,000
Additional Funding	$66,147	$169,320	$128,120	$487,051	$237,813	$186,823	$217,212
Total trails funding to the Bitterroot National Forest	**$456,607**	**$622,320**	**$606,120**	**$965,051**	**$749,813**	**$655,823**	**$598,212**

[1] Unusually high budgets due to ARRA and CFLRP

The following Table, 3.2-7, shows the estimated costs associated with trail maintenance.

Table 3.2- 7: Estimated Trail Operation, Maintenance, and Improvement Costs for the Bitterroot National Forest

MVUM Code	Trail Category	Estimated Cost($/Mile)
7	Trail open to vehicles 50" or less in width - yearlong	$750/mile
8	Trail open to vehicles 50" or less in width - seasonally	$500/mile
9	Trail open to motorcycles - yearlong	$325/mile
10	Trail open to motorcycles - seasonally	$250/mile
28	New trail construction for 60 inch width[1]	$17,000/mile

[1] Trails constructed as connectors for roads or trails for OHV use (60 inch width tread, pack and saddle standard clearing limit: 8'x10', includes clearing, grubbing, excavation and rolling dip construction at 100' intervals).

Mobilization $cost/mile and Contracting Officer Representative's time for administration both included in this estimate.

The following need to be considered along with the cost estimates:

- Ø A well designed motorized trail could cost less than this estimate
- Ø Estimate is using actual figures for maintaining at less-than-optimum trail design
- Ø Trails passing through burns will always cost more to maintain
- Ø Estimates based on contracting costs. Estimates do not take Forest crew costs into account

J. Motorized Use

National Forest System roads are only open to highway-legal vehicles. Currently, unlicensed OHVs travel on Forest System roads from dispersed campsites and parking areas to specific trail destinations. Under specific circumstances, system roads could be designated as dual use for both licensed and unlicensed vehicles. However, the dual use designation can only be authorized on individual roads following an analysis and evaluation of the risks involved.

Throughout this document, distinction is made between double track trail (for ATVs or vehicles 50 inches or less in width), and single track trails (for motorcycle). It should be noted that single track vehicles can travel on ATV trails; however ATV vehicles are restricted from traveling on single track trails. Additionally, ATVs and motorcycles are permitted to operate on identified roads closed to full-size motorized vehicles. All nonmotorized users can use single or ATV trails, but nonmotorized means motorized vehicles cannot travel on nonmotorized trails.

It is important for the reader to note that anytime a specific road, trail, or area has considerable adverse environmental effects occurring from motorized use, the Responsible Official has the authority, according to 36 CFR 295.5, to immediately close the road, trail or area until the problem has been resolved.

Motorized Vehicle Use Management (MVUM) Codes were used in this planning process. The codes are listed in Table 3.2-8, below.

Table 3.2- 8: Motorized Vehicle Use Management Codes

MVUM Code	Type of Vehicle	Season of Use
0	Route closed to all motorized travel	None
1	Road open to all vehicles (mixed use)	Yearlong
2	Road open to all vehicles (mixed use)	Seasonal
3	Road open to highway-legal vehicles	Yearlong
4	Road open to highway-legal vehicles	Seasonally
23	*Proposed* road open to highway-legal vehicles	Yearlong
7	Trail open to vehicles 50" or less in width	Yearlong
8	Trail open to vehicles 50" or less in width	Seasonally
28	*Proposed* trail open to vehicles 50" or less in width	Seasonally
9	Trail open to motorcycles	Yearlong
10	Trail open to motorcycles	Seasonally

K. Coincident Routes

The concept of motorized trail vehicles (ATVs and motorcycles) on roads closed to full size vehicles is consistent with what the Forest Service defines as a "coincident route": *a route that is managed as part of another different inventoried route(s) in the Forest Transportation Atlas.* The 2005 Travel Management Rule requires that these routes, many of which are National Forest System roads, also reside on the

database of National Forest System trails in order to be identified on a MVUM. A road may be coincident with another road or trail, and a trail may also be coincident with another trail. Thus, MVUM codes 7 and 8, defined in the Transportation section (Chapter 3, Section 3.1.3 C) of this FEIS, as maintenance level (ML) ML 1 and ML 2 roads closed yearlong to full size vehicles but open to motorized vehicles 50 inches in width or less, are termed coincident routes, and will be placed on the National Forest Trail System and managed as trails. These miles of trails, approximately 595, currently exist on the ground as most of the 660 miles displayed in Table 3.2-2, and little maintenance is currently done annually. For information on ML roads, please refer to the Transportation section (Chapter 3, Section 3.1) of this FEIS. Those routes that provide a motorized opportunity are typically being cleared by the various user groups.

On the Bitterroot National Forest, the vast majority of coincident routes are ML 1 and 2 roads closed yearlong to full size vehicles. The Forest has one exception: the Jew Mountain Road (#5706) is considered a coincident route open to a mixed use of street legal motorized and motorized trail vehicles. This management is considered "concurrent use" and, according to policy, must be managed for mixed traffic. Each traffic type has independent requirements for operators and vehicles that are legal on those routes. In order to allow mixed uses on routes during the same timeframe requires an independent engineering analysis to be completed and approved prior to this kind of designation.

None of the coincident routes proposed in the Travel Management Planning Project FEIS will have concurrent use of full size highway vehicles and trail vehicles.

Historically these coincident routes (that have allowed motorized trail traffic behind yearlong closures to full size vehicles) have been maintained only on an as-needed basis. Many of the most popular coincident routes have remained passable through the efforts of the forest users who enjoy the opportunity they provide. Other, higher profile coincident routes ((Jew Mountain Road (#5706) or a portion of Thunder Mountain Road (#5685)) receive limited maintenance from road or trail crews, mainly to clear fallen rock or cut out fallen trees in the travel way. Many of these coincident routes have grown in over time, and receive no use due to varying physical conditions found on the landscape.

L. Utility Vehicle (UTV) Motorized Use

Originally, UTVs were manufactured to be about 65 inches in width using four or more low pressure tires with a steering wheel, tail light, brake light, headlights, and seating for two or more occupants. Some were designed with a cargo or dump box and a roll bar. Currently, manufacturers are building UTVs that are smaller in size and fit within the 50 inch category. For this Travel Management Planning Project, the Forest has determined that UTVs less than 50 inches in width would be permitted on designated, motorized trails less than 50 inches in width on the forest.

M. Current Regulations for Motorized Trails

The Bitterroot National Forest Plan was amended in January 2001 to "prohibit motorized wheeled cross-country travel." This amendment was based on the Off-Highway Vehicle Record of Decision (ROD) and Plan Amendment for Montana, North Dakota and portions of South Dakota (2001 Tri-State Decision). The ROD restricted yearlong motorized wheeled cross-country travel where it was not already restricted to minimize resource damage, uses conflict, and related problems including new unauthorized routes associated with motorized wheeled cross-country travel (USDI/USDA 2001a).

In the case of ATVs, motorized travel is considered cross-country travel when the vehicle width does not easily fit the trail profile. In other words, a trail is closed to ATVs if undisturbed ground or vegetation on either side of the trail is crushed by the passage of an ATV. The 2005 Forest Visitor Map is the public document showing legal status of motorized recreation routes until the new travel management plan is completed and a motor vehicle use map (MVUM) is issued. The 2005 map provides information on Area Restrictions and Trail Restrictions by vehicle type. Vehicle definitions are on the map legend. By definition, vehicles over 50 inches in width are considered full-size vehicles, and are not permitted on trails. Standards for maintenance and reconstruction for motorized trails differ from foot and horse trails.

Motorized trails can require more frequent clearing and drainage maintenance to prevent resource degradation. Trails originally designed for foot and horse traffic often require reconstruction to accommodate motorized use. This amounts to a substantial investment that requires protection through regular maintenance.

Unauthorized trails are those that are created by users, primarily used by ATVs and motorcycles, and are not included on the Forest's Transportation System. The Forest, with the involvement from user groups, mapped unauthorized motorized routes, but it is not a complete inventory, thus the total miles of unauthorized trails is unknown. Unauthorized routes are not engineered or constructed to Forest Service standards. They are often located on steep grades or in boggy areas. Due to the lack of consideration for resource effects during their creation, most unauthorized routes are more prone to erosion and sediment production than system routes. However, the Forest Service cannot expend funds to maintain or improve unauthorized routes; maintenance and improvements are intended to ensure the integrity of travel routes. Consequently, conditions on these routes will continue to deteriorate as erosion creates deeper ruts and exposes more rocks, resulting in resource and safety concerns.

Unauthorized trails are created each year, and become very difficult to close once they are created. This is in part because many public users do not know that the trail is closed for use and just simply follow an established track. Signing has been somewhat effective but only lasts until the sign is pulled down or destroyed. One of the key elements in preventing unauthorized trails is to create a trail system that meets the needs of the different users so they have a place to go. A few trails have been reconstructed to ATV standards, but most trails used by ATVs have never been properly constructed for this type of use. So when ATV users come to a section of trail not suitable for ATV travel they create their own route (thus an unauthorized trail). This situation has happened in a number of locations on the Forest, and would continue if more suitable and sustainable routes are not developed. The 2005 Travel Management Rule changed the legal authority for regulating off-route travel by designating routes and areas for motor vehicles. The rule mandates that all national forests complete a travel management review for summer motorized road and trail uses, identify the appropriate class of vehicles for use on specific roads and trails, and to specifically designate which routes are open to motor vehicles.

N. Motorized/Mechanical Transport Summer Use on System Trails

Motorized system trails include routes used by vehicles 50 inches or less in width such as ATVs or motorcycles. Of the approximately 1,211 miles of trail outside of Designated Wilderness (this includes system trails and roads open as trails (coincident routes)), approximately 660 miles are open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width yearlong or seasonally. Centerline gradient, side hill slope and surface roughness varies, but are primarily responsible for providing the challenge the user faces on these trails. The challenge levels are typically intermediate-to-advanced. Motorcycles, stock, and hikers tend to utilize the same standard of trail and have historically shared the same routes. Trail surface conditions can vary greatly depending on the trail gradient, drainage structures, and soil type. If conditions deteriorate, trail tread can quickly become wider, such as what is occurring on Trail #39. If logs block the trail the tread can quickly become braided. Segments of some system trails have been converted from single track to ATV width by ATV use. Some system trails closed to motorized use have seen illegal use by ATVs such as portions of Trail #313.

With the improved technology of ATVs and their increased popularity, their use has become an important activity on National Forests. With this increased use, management problems have also increased. Trails are more impacted as user numbers increase, thus causing some localized resource problems such as erosion. All-terrain vehicle trails are now appearing where only single track trail used to be. All-terrain vehicle users have pioneered further into areas that previously were only used by single track vehicles. Where terrain was the limiting factor for ATV use in the past, it has become less of a restriction year after year. A study of ATV traffic effects to trails and resources concluded that ATV traffic degrades natural resources regardless of ATV type, size, or tire type. The study suggests "that to simply limit ATV traffic to

trails is not enough to protect the natural resources. Trail planning and design, particularly trail location, are key considerations for limiting disturbance to natural resources" (Foltz and Meadows 2007). All new trail segments, and unauthorized trail conversion to system trail proposed was subject to review under these considerations.

Approximately 330 miles of system trails outside of Designated Wilderness are currently open yearlong to motorcycles, with an additional 78 miles open seasonally, for a total of 408 miles. The challenge levels are easy-to-advanced. Some of these trails get little-to-no motorcycle use. Where such use is light, hikers and stock can generally utilize the same standard of single-track trail. An exception is on those trails with tight climbing turns where motorcycles must leave the trail to make the turn. For years, shared use of lightly-used motorcycle trails has been easily accommodated; where motorcycle use is heavier, the standard of trail and frequency of maintenance become more of a concern. Increasing motorcycle use drives the need to improve the trail to accommodate that use. Trail surface conditions can vary greatly depending on trail gradient, drainage structures, and soil type. Trail tread can be 12-30 inches wide. If tread conditions deteriorate or if logs block the trail, the tread can quickly become braided. Some system trails closed to motorized use have been illegally used by motorcycles such as the Tin Cup Trail #96.

O. Mechanical Transport (Mechanized Use)

Bicycles are increasingly being used for recreation on roads and trails on the Bitterroot National Forest. Bicycle technology, primarily brakes and suspension systems, have vastly improved in the last decade. Bicycles may be seen on most any trail, and are becoming more popular annually. Bicycles are permitted on all trails outside of Designated Wilderness unless specifically noted.

Bicycles are currently permitted on all of the 593 miles of system trails outside of Designated Wilderness. Trails within the Bass Creek Day Use Area and Coyote Coulee Trail #127 are popular bicycle loop trails that are shared with horse riders. Trails in the Selway-Bitterroot, Stony Mountain, and Allen Mountain Inventoried Roadless Areas, and the Sapphire and Blue Joint Wilderness Study Areas, were specifically mentioned in comments on the DEIS as "exemplary trails" by bicycle users. Some of these include Warm Spring Ridge Trail #177, Castle Rock Trail #627, Jack the Ripper Trail #137, Blue Joint Trail #614, Razor Back Ridge Trail #106, Sheephead Creek Trail #142, Bear Creek Overlook #126, Hole in the Wall Trail #434, Blodgett Trail #19, and Ward Mountain Trail #208.

Between the DEIS and FEIS, a number of comments were received indicating that the Bitterroot National Forest was "lumping" mountain bike use in with motorized use, and failing to recognizing the difference between the two types of uses. Many referred to the June 18, 2008 letter from Deputy Chief Holtrop stating that mountain biking is a nonmotorized use of the National Forest System trails along with hiking and horseback riding {Project File document REC-068.pdf}. The Forest acknowledges that mountain bike use is not a motorized use, but rather falls under the definition of Mechanical Transport (Mechanized Use) as defined in the Glossary, Appendix C to the FEIS: "Any contrivance for moving people or material in or over land, water, or air, having moving parts, that provides a mechanical advantage to the user, and that is powered by a living or nonliving power source. This includes, but is not limited to, sailboats, hang gliders, parachutes, bicycles, game carriers, carts, and wagons. It does not include wheelchairs when used as necessary medical appliances. It also does not include skis, snowshoes, rafts, canoes, sleds, travois, or similar primitive devices without moving parts (FSM 2320.5(3)). Mechanical transport, as herein used, shall include any contrivance which travels over ground, snow, or water on wheels, tracks, skids, or by floatation and is propelled by a nonliving power source contained or carried on or within the device (36 CFR §293.6).",{PF WSA-032}.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) and the Forest Service (FS) states "The purpose of this MOU is to continue to develop and expand a framework for the FS and IMBA to plan and implement mutually beneficial programs, projects, and bicycling opportunities at the national, regional, and local level." The MOU goes on to state in III. (4), "Subject to applicable federal laws, regulations, land management plans, and other management direction,

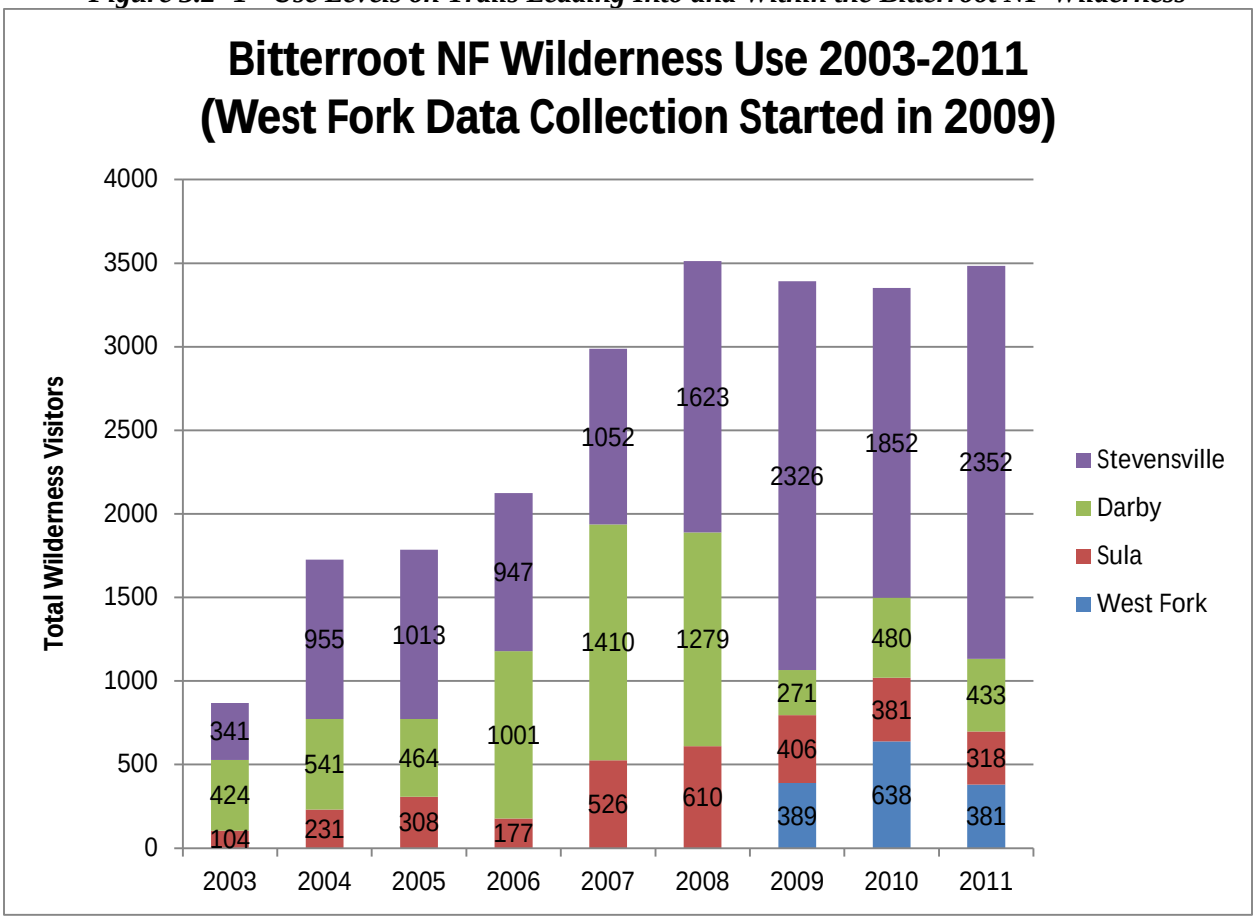
make NFS [National Forest System] lands and NFS trails available for mountain bicycling and related activities " {Project File document REC-066.pdf}.

The Bitterroot National Forest currently has an agreement with the Bitterroot Backcountry Cyclists, based in Hamilton, Montana, who assist with trail maintenance work. During the 2013 season, over 54 miles of trails were cleared.

P. Nonmotorized Summer Use on System Trails

Nonmotorized summer use on system trails accounts for the vast majority of trail use across the Forest as referenced by Table 3.2-1. Voluntary registration boxes are located at most popular trailheads on the Forest, but compliance is spotty as many visitors choose not to register. The most heavily-used trails are easily accessible from the Bitterroot Valley, and lead into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Please refer to Figure 3.2.1, below, for use levels on trails leading into the Selway-Bitterroot and Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness areas from 2003-2011. Trails in the Sapphire Mountain Range or on the south end of the Forest receive much less use. Day hiking, followed by backpacking and horse riding/packing, are the main uses. During hunting season, horse use on the Forest typically increases.

Figure 3.2- 1 - Use Levels on Trails Leading Into and Within the Bitterroot NF Wilderness



Q. Special Emphasis Trails

On the Bitterroot National Forest there are four National Recreation Trails, which are trails designated by the Chief of the Forest Service as provided in Section 4(a) of the National Trails System Act. These trails,

the Easthouse Trail, the Palisade Trail, the Big Hole Battlefield Trail (Nez Perce Trail), and the Lake Como Trail, provide a day-use or extended trail experience for a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities reasonably accessible to population centers.

Although the primary purpose of the trails is for outdoor recreation use, other uses as power lines, livestock driveways, and logging-road operations, may be permitted if they will not conflict with the nature and purpose of the trail.

In addition, there are two National Historic Trails on the Forest which include segments of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and segments of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail. Goals and standards for these trails can be found within (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-78 and 79) or within their own comprehensive plans as appropriate.

There is one National Scenic Trail on the Forest, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST). The 1985 CDNST Comprehensive Plan amendment, published in the Federal Register on October 5, 2009 (74 FR 51116), set forth direction to guide the development and management of the trail (USDA Forest Service, 2009; The 2009 Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Plan) {Project File document REC-069.pdf}.

The 2009 CDNST Comprehensive Plan provides consistency with the decision made in that amendment, replaces the 1985 CDNST Comprehensive Plan, and describes the nature and purposes of the CDNST: "The nature and purpose of the CDNST are to provide for high scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities, and to conserve natural, historic, and cultural resources along the CDNST corridor."

A 1997 memorandum from the Deputy Chief of the Forest Service to Regional Foresters clarified the Forest Service's intent with respect to motor vehicle use on newly constructed CDNST trail segments. In addition, this memorandum identifies the importance of understanding the nature and purposes of the CDNST in establishing direction governing its development and management:

- As the CDNST is further developed, it is expected that the trail would eventually be relocated off of roads for its entire length. The memorandum further states: It is the intent of the Forest Service that the CDNST would be for nonmotorized recreation…Allowing motorized use on these newly constructed trail segments would substantially interfere with the nature and purpose of the CDNST.
- The CNDST is an important attraction that is likely to draw people from the local and regional area, as well as some national interest.

Within the Management Policies and Direction, Recreation Resource Management section of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan 5b (2) it goes on to clarify; "Bicycle use may be allowed on the CDNST (16 U.S.C. 1246(c)) if the use is consistent with the applicable land and resource management plan and will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST."

Then in Section 6b (6) "In the case of motorized over-snow vehicles, use is allowed in accordance with 36 CFR Part 212,Subpart C, on National Forest System lands or is allowed on public lands and the use will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST" (FSM 2353.42).

Currently the 25 mile section of CDNST managed by the Bitterroot National Forest has nonmotorized sections on either end. The section from Chief Joseph Pass to Gibbons Pass is closed to summer motorized use, as is the portion in the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness. In 2008, seven segments of the CDNST were authorized for construction between these designated nonmotorized segments, and built to a maximum trail tread width of 24 inches. These locations/construction were done to construct trail where none had existed before, reestablish trail tread where it was lost from past logging activity, move the trail off the interim route (road), and reduce grade and improve soil stability. These seven segments were constructed and now the location of the CDNST on the Bitterroot National Forest is complete.

Please refer to the Environmental Consequences discussion of this chapter (Section 3.2.4) for effects by alternative for the segments of the CDNST on the Forest.

In addition to the specialty trails mentioned above, there are two trails on the Forest that generated a number of comments throughout the entire travel management planning process: Trail #39 (Chain of Lakes) and Trail #313 (Bitterroot/Rock Creek Divide). Background information on the trails is provided below; the effects to Trails #39 and #313 will be discussed in the Environmental Consequences section of this chapter, and Chapter 3, Section 3.3 (Wilderness).

Trail #39 (Chain of Lakes)

Trail #39 is an ATV trail located partially within the Sapphire Wilderness Study Area (WSA). It was constructed as an "access road" during the Sleeping Child Fire of 1961. The trail is approximately 6.5 miles long, and runs from Road #726 to the Bitterroot Rock Creek Divide Trail #313. Currently, the trail management objective is Trail Class 2 (the designed use is as an ATV trail), and the design parameters have a basic tread width of 50 inches at 20 percent maximum sustained grade. The dates for managed use are from 07/01-10/01. The other accepted uses are hikers/pedestrians, pack and saddle, bicycle, and motorcycle. The trail provides the ATV enthusiast with an opportunity to ride through high alpine meadows, subalpine larch stands, and rugged rocky terrain. The steep and rocky trail conditions make this a trail for intermediate-to-advanced riders.

The Sapphire Wilderness Study Area Assessment (May 2006) {Project File folder 'wilderness_study_areas,' Project File document WSA-010.pdf} stated Trail #39 in 1977 was an "access road" and fire line in 1961 (USDA Forest Service. 1961). "It was felt that 4x4 use was causing damage, but that vehicles under 40" were not causing serious damage at the time. The 40" width criteria permits distinguishing between trail cycles and larger vehicles (cars and trucks)" (USDA 1976a). It is identified in various 1970s documents and maps as "a primitive road," "excavated fireline," "pack trail," "dozer trails," etc. The 1978 Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS) identifies this trail as "highly impactive" and "separable impacts." For additional information on WARS, please refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.3 (Wilderness) of this FEIS. In the 1990s, work was performed on the trail to address erosion problems, including reducing several extremely excessive grades and wide running surfaces. While this helped for some time, it did not solve the problems due to the gradient of the slope the trail is located on and the amount of use it receives. In August of 2005, a trail condition survey was conducted by the Forest Trail Specialist. The survey states, "This type [of] use on rocky, steep grades encourages drains to fill w/ [with] large rocks. This can happen right after they are cleaned and make them insufficient for getting water off trail…Use is increasing on this route" [1]{Project File folder 'chain_of_lakes_tr39,' Project File document COL-003.pdf}

The survey went on to state "Both erosion and spinning tires, wide tires w/ 12" surface will dislodge dirt, rocks and make erosional effects more dramatic. Grades of 25% are too steep for ATV use from this standpoint. This is not a sustainable situation and will degrade each year. I talked w/ a local who said the trail is much rougher now than right after it was reconstructed. 'Used to be able to get from Frog Pond to trailhead in 45 minutes. Now its [sic] 60 minutes to the lakes turnoff. Can't you do something about that?'"

The condition survey continued: "Without complete drainage mtnc [maintenance] twice per year, current traffic amounts and increasing use will only accelerate erosion, continuing to fill drains-making them ineffective. Large-scale, lengthy relocations at lower grades would make more disturbances. At this elevation, rehabilitation of ex. [existing] Route would be questionably successful. Plus the size of facility needed for ATVs (50" minimum), would be visually detrimental."

1 During May 2005, the Bitterroot National Forest utilized volunteers to clean flexible water bars (FWBs), along 3 miles of the trail; 3 months later the FWBs were full again.

In July of 2010, another trail condition survey was conducted by the Forest Trail Specialist {Project File document COL-005.pdf}. The survey stated "[The] trail continues to erode fines away and expose more rock. Expect use has increased since last survey…flexible water bars [FWBs] and rolling dips are normally filled w/ rock and some fines, rendering them ineffective much of the year...Another trend is that machines are tending to pass over fwb's off the end, either lower or upper and wearing another tread or widened tread…This will render the drains somewhat less effective as water will run on developed track, above or below the end of the fwb's…Banked turns are getting taller banks or eroding down." The report goes on to say "OHV's continue to use 500 lf [linear feet] of FT 421 Faith Lake." This use is occurring annually as OHVs try to push further along this single track, travel restricted to nonmotorized users only route. "And motorcycle tracks today going into the lakes. Trail closed to all motorized yearlong."

There has been an ongoing management dilemma for Trail #39; the Forest has been unable to maintain the trail two to three times annually as is needed, which takes time away from other forest trail priorities. And as stated above, due to the trail's location and its popularity, those efforts typically do not last more than a few months. What is needed is to relocate the trail to grades where it would be more sustainable in the long run and get away from the 6-10 foot wide tread that washes an unacceptable amount of fines between rocks. This would involve rerouting six sections of the trail, each approximately ¼ to ½ mile in length, requiring double track construction to make the route more sustainable, utilizing NFS trail specifications. This new construction would occur within the Sapphire WSA.

There is only spotty data available on use in the area (Sapphire Wilderness Study Area Wilderness Characteristics Assessment {Project File folder 'wilderness_study_areas,' Project File document WSA-010.pdf}), and (Wilderness Character Monitoring report from the Wilderness Institute for the Sapphire Wilderness Study Area {Project File document WSA-012.pdf}). A trail counter installed on Trail #39 from July 14 to October 20, 2006 showed approximately 3.8 vehicles per day average daily vehicle traffic {Project File document COL-006.pdf}.

In September of 2008, a Region 1 supplement to the Forest Service Manual was published which provided clarification of the management of wilderness study areas {Project File document WSA-013.pdf}. Forest Service Manual 2300-2008-1, Section 2329 (Management of Wilderness Study Areas) states:

1. Manage Montana Wilderness Study Areas (MWSA) to maintain wilderness character as it existed at time of designation (1977) and potential for inclusion of the area in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NPWS).
    a. When making project level decisions (for example, trail maintenance, relocation, improvement, construction, reconstruction, permitted uses, and closure), the line officer must consider the effect on the decision on the wilderness character as it existed in 1977 (see Exhibit 01 for definition of wilderness characteristics).
    b. If wilderness characteristics have been degraded, restore the area to 1977 conditions. That is, if a trail was single track and has evolved into two-track, close the trail to two-track use and restore it to single track use or allow natural restoration where effective. If conflicting uses are occurring, consider separating the uses geographically through an appropriate planning process. That is, identify areas for snowmobiling and areas for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.
    c. Trails should not be upgraded to a more-developed standard than existed in 1977.
    d. Pursuant to 36 CFR 212.52(2), the line officer shall institute closure of a trail in a Wilderness Study Area if use is causing or will cause considerable adverse effects on resource values referred to in Sec. 212.52(2), until the effects are mitigated or eliminated.
2. Management of existing uses and facilities.
    a. At the time of designation of the areas, uses that existed in 1977 can be allowed to continue subject to 36 CFR 212.57. If increases in amount of use occur, the line officer should consider how the increases affect wilderness character and the area's potential for inclusion in the NWPS. If negative effects are noted, implement actions described in 1.b. of this policy.

3. New uses, activities, and facilities.
    a. When evaluating new uses, resource management activities, or administrative facilities in the WSA such as prescribed fire, tree planting, trail construction, or special use permits, document how the use, activity or facility maintains the wilderness character and the potential for the area's inclusion in the NWPS.
    b. Uses, activities, or facilities that are detrimental to or do not maintain or enhance the wilderness character and potential for the area's inclusion I the NWPS will not be allowed.
    c. All-terrain vehicles (ATV's) and motor bikes may be allowed on roads that had jeep use in 1977 (two tracks).
    d. Mountain bikes may be allowed on trails that had established motor-bike use in 1977 or on non-motorized trails as long as the aggregate amount of mountain bike and motorcycle use maintains the wilderness character of the WSA as it existed in 1977 and the area's potential for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.
4. Monitoring. Forests and Grasslands shall monitor WSAs to ensure that the wilderness character is not diminished beyond what existed in 1977 and to ensure that the areas are maintained for potential inclusion in the NWPS. Monitoring WSAs will be covered through the encompassing monitoring program for the Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP)" (USDA Forest Service 2008a).

For additional information regarding Trail #39, please refer to Section 3.2.4 (Environmental Consequences) of this document, and Chapter 3, Sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 (Designated Wilderness, Recommended Wilderness, Inventoried Roadless Areas, and Wilderness Study Areas).

Trail #313 (Bitterroot/Rock Creek Divide)

The Bitterroot/Rock Creek Divide Trail #313 was constructed in the early 1900s to provide access for fire protection and to several fire lookouts along the Rock Creek Divide. It is about 84 miles in length. This trail historically traversed much of the length of the Sapphire Crest from Eightmile Saddle to the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness. Tread width along the trail varies from full size vehicle width to single track, with roads replacing some portions of the trail. The terrain varies from wide open ridge tops to steep timbered sections, lending itself to a variety of recreational experiences. The trail crosses back and forth along the Divide, and is located alternately on the Bitterroot, Beaverhead-Deerlodge, and Lolo National Forests along most of its length. The Bitterroot National Forest has the responsibility for maintenance of this trail from the Stevensville Ranger District down to the Sula District, (mile post 0.00 to 78.90). See Table 3.2-9 – Trail 313 Existing Segments for additional information.

Designation of where motorized use is allowed on Trail #313 has a complicated history, which has resulted in confusion and conflicts between motorized and nonmotorized uses. Going into the Travel Management Planning process, it was acknowledged that people have different understandings of what the existing motorized use condition is for Trail #313, and it was stated in the scoping document (*A Starting Point*) that "The Bitterroot National Forest Visitor and Travel Plan Maps, issued on July 15, 2005 (with 6/7/07 errata), identify current road, trails and area restrictions for motorized vehicles…These maps display the existing condition for motorized recreation use…" {Project File folder 'public_involvement_scoping_09_2007-08_2009', Project File document, SCOPING-004.pdf, p. 5.}

For additional information regarding Trail #313, please refer to Table 3.2-9, below, and Section 3.2.4 (Environmental Consequences) of this document.

Table 3.2- 9: Trail 313

ID in Database	Description	Beginning Mile Post	Ending Mile Post	Miles	MVUM Code
TRAIL313.1	Eightmile Saddle to Trail #308	0.00	3.22	3.22	0
TRAIL313.1	Trail #308 to TR-SCOP-30 (Trail #329 Reroute)	3.22	4.07	0.85	0
TRAIL313.1	TR-SCOP-30 to start of 1st segment to be routed out of the Welcome Creek Wilderness	4.07	4.40	0.33	0
TRAIL313.1	Start of 1st segment to be routed out of the Wilderness to end of 1st segment to be routed out of the Wilderness	4.40	4.70	0.30	0
TRAIL313.1	End of 1st segment to be routed out of the Wilderness to the start of the 2nd segment to be routed out of the Wilderness	4.70	4.95	0.25	0
TRAIL313.1	Start of the 2nd segment to be routed out of the Wilderness to end of the 2nd segment to be routed out of the Wilderness	4.95	5.25	0.30	0
TRAIL313.1	End of the 2nd segment to be routed out of the Wilderness to Road #13154	5.25	6.45	1.20	0
TRAIL313.1	Road #13154 to Cinnabar Saddle	6.45	7.62	1.17	0
TRAIL313.1	Cinnabar Saddle to Ambrose Saddle	7.62	12.61	4.99	10
TRAIL313.1	Ambrose Saddle to Sawmill Saddle	12.61	19.10	6.49	10
TRAIL313.1	Sawmill Saddle to northern end of the Lolo National Forest closure	19.10	22.07	2.96	0
TRAIL313.1	Northern end of the Lolo National Forest closure to southern end of the Lolo National Forest closure	22.07	31.90	9.83	0
TRAIL313.1	Southern end of the Lolo National Forest closure to Skalkaho Pass	31.90	37.95	6.05	0
TRAIL313.2	Skalkaho Pass to Abundance Saddle (Intersection of Trails #313 and #39)	0.00	22.82	22.82	0
TRAIL313.5	Closed to motorized use to protect culturally-sensitive area	0.00	1.00	1.00	0
TRAIL313.5	Southern end of historical site closure to near Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Trail #8020 intersection. Intersection with Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Road #8671.	1.00	7.02	6.02	7
TRAIL313.5	Near Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Trail #8020 intersection to Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Road #80	7.02	7.82	0.80	7
TRAIL313.6	Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Road #80 to the intersection/ Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Road #8107 (Obrien Mine)	0.00	1.75	1.75	7
TRAIL313.6	Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Road #8107 to 1mile south of Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Road # 8107	1.75	2.70	0.95	7

ID in Database	Description	Beginning Mile Post	Ending Mile Post	Miles	MVUM Code
TRAIL313.6	1Mile south of Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Road #8107 to the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness	2.70	5.94	3.24	9
TRAIL313.7	Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness to the end of Trail #313 (Intersection with Trail #9 (CDNST))	0.00	9.52	9.52	0

R. Over-Snow Use

Motorized and nonmotorized over-snow users differ on the amounts of National Forest System lands they believe should be available to them. During the over-snow season (December-May), most Forest seasonal roads and trails are closed due to snow and are available for use by snowmobiles unless other restrictions apply. Snowmobiling, snow-shoeing, and dog sledding, as well as back-country and cross-country skiing, are popular winter activities that occur within the analysis area. Snowmobile parking areas are located on the Darby, Sula, and West Fork Ranger Districts. Volunteer groomed cross-country ski areas are located on the Darby and Sula Ranger Districts. Hiking is also a popular winter activity on lower elevation trails on the Stevensville Ranger District.

Both motorized and nonmotorized over-snow users utilize many of the same access points for their activities; however, most of the area around these access points is typically utilized by motorized users. While the majority of both user groups are generally compatible, there are some conflicts of uses. Generally, nonmotorized users utilize much smaller areas and travel a shorter distance from their access points, whereas motorized users can travel 50+ miles per visit. Motorized users argue that nonmotorized users have the whole Forest to recreate on, while motorized users are regulated by area and route. Nonmotorized users, such as those who cross-country ski and snowshoe, argue that fewer accessible areas are available to their user group, and the effects of exhaust smells, noise, loss of solitude, and safety concerns with fast moving vehicles degrade their experience. All are seeking settings that meet their specific recreation interests and needs.

The over-snow vehicle use map (OSVUM) will identify where motorized OHV use is allowed, restricted, or prohibited. This map's purpose will be to show the open areas and prohibitions for use by over-snow vehicles on the Forest pursuant to 36 CFR 212.81, and will show established snowmobile routes as well as routes that are open to snowmobiles in areas closed to cross-country snowmobile travel. Detailed information about motorized routes for wheeled vehicles is available in Appendix G to the FEIS, which shows the routes which were screened for the DEIS, and Appendix H to the FEIS, which shows the changes made to routes between the DEIS and the FEIS.

Special orders may supersede certain portions of these maps, and certain conditions may warrant temporary special closures to motorized uses to mitigate safety or resource concerns.

History of Over-Snow Use

The history of motorized over-snow vehicle use began in 1908, with the first of many versions of over-snow vehicles up until the 1950s, when the first snowmobile, the Polaris Snow Traveler, was invented. Over the years, snowmobiles have been improved and tested in various locations, temperatures, and terrain. New technological developments include fuel injection, rail suspension, traction, tunnels that taper to allow the sled to power through deep snow, self-adjusting disc brakes, spark plugs that provide better performance, tracks with better lugs, and improved ski profiles that allow the user to travel faster, higher, and into territory that older machines could not reach. The industry has more innovation than ever before with professional riders and events that invite more users to the sport annually.

According to research conducted by Consumer Insights (International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association website; www.snowmobile.org/facts) the main reasons people enjoy the sport of snowmobiling include:

- To view the scenery
- To be with friends
- To get away from usual demands of life
- To do something with their family
- To be close with nature

The research also indicates the sport of snowmobiling appeals to those of all ages, and is a popular family recreation activity. Snowmobiles have also proven to be a useful in search and rescue operations, emergency response, law enforcement, environmental and wildlife studies, ski patrol, cross-country ski trail track setting, and track/trail grooming.

The Bitterroot Ridge Runners, a snowmobile club based in Hamilton, Montana, maintains a well signed and groomed trail system that supports snowmobiling opportunities on the east side of the Forest. The club, under the terms of a volunteer agreement with the Bitterroot National Forest, grooms approximately 79 miles of trails with another 59 miles of trails only marked with trail markers, but not groomed.

Definition of Over-Snow Vehicle

The Forest Service Manual defines an over-snow vehicle in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 212.1 as "A motor vehicle that is designed for use over snow and that runs on a track or tracks and/or a ski or skis, while in use over snow" (36 CFR §212.1).

Motorized Over-Snow Use

Snowmobile use on the Bitterroot National Forest has grown in popularity according to the most recent NVUM Report (USDA Forest Service 2009c). The more advanced riders enjoy an off-trail riding experience to explore bowls and outlying areas. Users daring to ride in higher elevations can reach almost all of the terrain open to over-snow vehicle use.

The Bitterroot National Forest currently has approximately 748,981 acres open to over-snow vehicle use during the snowmobile season. The 2003 Sapphire Mountains Snowmobile Trails map published by the Forest and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks shows groomed and non-groomed trails on the east side of the Forest. All trails on the map are along system roads; no Forest Service System trails are shown as snowmobile trails. The current map does not prohibit off trail snowmobile use. Some of the best snowmobiling can be found in meadows and open mountainsides at higher elevations, especially over 7,000 feet. The 2003 Sapphire Mountain Snowmobile Trails map will be replaced with the Over-Snow Vehicle Map when published.

The current groomed system would remain the same in all alternatives across the Forest for over-snow vehicle use. No new groomed or non-groomed routes are proposed with this travel planning process.

Nonmotorized Over-Snow Use

Nordic and backcountry skiing, as well as other types of nonmotorized winter recreation activities, have been enjoyed by visitors to the Forest for many years. Nonmotorized over-snow use occurs on the same trails that are easily accessible from the Bitterroot Valley in the summer. Most of the use is close to the trailheads; hikers walk on packed snow. Those who snowshoe and ski use trails that lead into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Most other trails on the Forest see much less use. Trails that are hard to access see almost no use in winter.

There are no National Forest System cross-country ski trails on the Bitterroot National Forest; however, the Forest has agreements with two volunteer groups to groom ski trails at Chief Joseph Pass and Lake Como. A portion of the Chief Joseph Cross-Country Ski Trail System is located on the Bitterroot National Forest, but the system is managed and maintained by the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and the Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club through a volunteer agreement. The cross-country ski trailhead and parking area is located at Chief Joseph Pass. A snowmobile parking lot is located off of Highway 93 near Forest Service Road #1260. There has been a long standing verbal agreement between the Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club and the Bitterroot Ridge Runners to keep motorized use off the groomed cross-country ski trails, resulting in very little conflict of use between user groups. The Lake Como Cross-Country Ski Trail System is also groomed through a volunteer agreement; parking facilities for this trail system are located at the Lake Como boat dock parking area. Multiple reports of unauthorized motorized use occurring on the Lake Como ski trail system are reported annually.

No developed trailheads exist specifically for backcountry skiing, but skiers use existing snowmobile parking areas.

S. Noise

Executive Order 11644, as amended by E.O. 11989, referenced in the 2005 Travel Management Rule, requires the Forest Service to consider the impacts of noise in the management of motorized recreation. Additionally, the Travel Management Rule requires that decisions to designate roads, trails, and other areas for motorized use take sound into account ((36 CFR 212.55(b)).

The Forest Service has the authority to enforce noise standards set by other federal agencies (typically EPA or OSHA), and by states according to 36 CFR 261.15 (d). The Forest Service also has the authority to set specific limitations through Special Order 36 CFR 261.55 (d); however, there are currently no special orders in place for noise restrictions. The standard fine for noise violations is $50. Noise is regulated on public lands in Montana according to Montana State Code 61 9 418. This law states that all motorcycles or quadricycles operated on streets and highways in the state shall be equipped with noise suppression devices at all times. National Forest roads and trails are considered public ways under this law, and are covered by this requirement. Montana State Code 23 2 634 regulates snowmobile noise.

Travel management decisions have the potential to change the types of vehicles that use certain areas of the Forest. A concern raised during scoping of the Travel Management Planning Project was the impact that noise from OHVs and other motorized vehicles has on the quality of users' experience. Nonmotorized users commented that the noise from motorcycles, ATVs, and snowmobiles in particular, detracts from the natural setting they wish to enjoy. Organized OHV clubs try to communicate to their membership that "noise annoys" and encourages them to muffle their machinery, recognizing how important a concern this is to many public land constituents. Many people enjoy recreating on public land to escape the noise of modern civilization. The natural sound-scape and tranquility is a condition that they seek as part of their recreational experience. The entire Forest is affected by noise in some way, whether it is ambient noise from wind in the trees, water flowing over rocks, or human created noise from airplane flights, motorized vehicles and equipment, or the sounds of gunshots.

Noise carries differently in the natural environment depending on topography, vegetative cover, ambient conditions, and snowpack. Flat terrain with little vegetative cover and crusty snowpack creates conditions for sound to carry longer distances than does terrain with more relief, vegetative cover and either fresh snow or no snow cover (USDI 2003).

T. Conflict of Uses on National Forest System Roads, Trails, and Areas

While the 2007 NVUM survey indicated that the majority of Bitterroot National Forest visitors were satisfied with their recreation experiences, there can be exceptions when users with different recreation expectations conflict. Conflicts of use between motorized and nonmotorized recreationists are a common complaint heard by Forest personnel, and can occur during all seasons where both uses occur in the same vicinity. Conflicts often occur during the hunting season, and primarily involve nonmotorized users seeking a quiet experience that is negatively affected by motorized use. One of the Purpose and Needs items for this travel management project identified conflict between motorized and nonmotorized uses as an issue to be addressed.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' scoping comment letter noted that the agency's staff talk to several thousand hunters each year at the Darby Check Station in the Bitterroot Valley, and each year comments about OHV use rank first or second among complaints {Project File folder 'wildlife,' Project File document WILD-020.pdf}. This indicates that a considerable amount of conflict exists involving the use of ATVs for hunting. Additionally, reported instances of conflicts of use on Forest trails has occurred on the Coyote Coulee Trail #127 between bicycles and stock; on Ward Mountain Trail #208 between hikers and motorcyclists; on the Divide Trail #159 between ATVs and hikers; and on the Warm Springs Creek Trail

#103 between horses and motorcycles. Over-snow conflict of use has occurred in the Camas Lakes area between snowmobilers, back-country skiers, and snowshoers.

Research (Williams 1993) shows that the following factors influence the likelihood of conflict: activity style, resource specificity, mode of experience, and tolerance for lifestyle diversity. Activity style refers to the significance the person attaches to the activity. Conflict is much more likely to occur if the activity is an integral part of the person's lifestyle rather than an occasional activity. Resource specificity refers to the significance a person attaches to using a specific resource. Conflict is more likely to occur when the person has a special relationship with a place, and perceives others are disrupting the traditional uses of the place or devaluing its meaning. Mode of experience refers to the way in which the environment is perceived. Conflict is more likely to occur when the person perceives the environment as part of the experience rather than as a backdrop for the experience. The last factor is tolerance for lifestyle diversity. Conflict is more likely to occur when the user has a higher tendency to reject lifestyles that are different than one's own. Examples include a preference for mechanized versus non-mechanized or consumptive versus non-consumptive activities.

Conflicts over the use of National Forest System lands arise from differing opinions about appropriate uses on these lands. Participants at public meetings and respondents to scoping and the DEIS questioned if the nature of conflicts represented "physical" confrontations between users in the field. Although there are some instances of such conflicts occurring on the Bitterroot National Forest, this is generally not the nature of use conflict as it relates to this travel management planning effort. It is about Forest users and their personal values, and the fact that personal values shape preferences for which activities are appropriate and desirable on public lands. Based on these preferences, some Forest visitors would tend to feel that their experience is disrupted by activities that they do not feel are appropriate or desirable. Conversely, other Forest visitors would feel offended or defensive when the activities they enjoy are identified as inappropriate or undesirable by others. The conflict related to travel management planning is most often characterized as motorized uses versus nonmotorized uses.

There is a great difference in opinions regarding the effects on a person's recreational experience when they encounter others on a road or trail. Some people using nonmotorized modes of travel become upset when they encounter or hear motorized equipment. Some express concern about safety when encountering motorized vehicles. The reverse situation is not as frequently true; most people using motorized modes of travel do not seem to be disturbed when they encounter people on foot, horseback, or bicycles. Often the situation is defined as "conflict of use," but there generally is not physical or safety conflict associated with one party encountering another party on the trail. The situation is more accurately described/defined as failure to fully meet the social expectation of the visitor. Face-to-face trail encounters between different kinds of users are usually polite. Use conflict involves one's willingness to accept other uses on trails, fear about losing one's use of a trail, or concern for the natural resource. Nonmotorized users may become dissatisfied, disappointed, or angry when recent motorized use has changed a smooth and compacted trail tread into loose, churned, or eroded tread, or users went off the existing trail tread, especially when using a favorite trail. Nonmotorized users can experience noise without seeing a motorcycle, or can experience dust without seeing an ATV. A hunter who arrives via foot or horse feels the presence of motorized trail vehicles affects the quality of the hunt, and possibly scares game away. The Montana State Trails Plan identifies a growing concern regarding the impact of motorized vehicles, ATVs in particular, on traditional hunting opportunities in the State (Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks 2000). A motorcycle rider might be concerned about being blamed for off-trail damage by hikers met along the trail. Snowmobilers may prefer not to see ski tracks in their favorite play area, fearing eventual loss of a traditional use area. A horseback rider may accept motorized use, but may have difficulty with his horse when meeting a motorcycle or bicycle. Trail users may have different understanding regarding who has the right of way. Use conflict can occur when use restrictions on roads and trails are not clearly understood, observed, or enforced. The degree of use conflict depends on the individual, the group they identify with, their experience, and the recreational setting of the particular road, trail, or area.

Research on the topic of use conflict is broad, with a typical finding that use conflicts are almost always one way. For example, skiers perceive snowmobilers interfering with their activity, but snowmobilers are generally indifferent to skiers (Jackson and Wong 1982). A similar pattern was documented between hikers and mountain bikers near Salt Lake City, where 32 percent of hikers felt bikers created conflicts and affected their experience, where only 5.6 percent of bikers felt hikers caused problems by not yielding the trail to bikers (Ramthum 1995). Conflict has been variously described by social scientists, but generally is attributed to goal interference attributed to others behavior (Jacob and Schreyer 1980).

Executive Order 11644, as amended by E.O. 11989, regarding management of OHVs, directed Federal agencies to ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands would be controlled so as to protect the resource of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands. This direction was interpreted in regulation 36 CFR 295.2, which was recently replaced with 36 CFR 212.55. A Forest Service study team reviewing access and travel management issues for the agency in 2002 made a series of recommendations, one of which was to "minimize conflict associated with access and travel management on NFS lands" (USDA Forest Service 2003a). On November 9, 2005 the Forest Service published the Final Rule: Travel Management: Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use (Federal Register Vol. 70, No. 216) that provides the direction for managing summer motor vehicle use on National Forest System lands.

U. Law Enforcement and Education

The Law Enforcement and Investigations staff of the U.S. Forest Service is comprised of professional patrol officers and criminal investigators dedicated to the protection of visitors, employees, and natural resources of National Forest System lands.

Uniformed patrol officers are called "LEOs" (Law Enforcement Officers). They patrol National Forest System lands to provide public safety services, prevent and detect violations, and to take appropriate law enforcement action in response to any incident they encounter. They are trained officers with an emphasis on natural resource protection with the objectives to: 1) Protect the public, employees, natural resources, and other property under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service, 2) Investigate and enforce applicable laws and regulations which effect the National Forest System, and 3) Prevent criminal violations through informing and educating visitors and users of applicable laws and regulations.

The Bitterroot National Forest has two full time LEOs who are responsible for issuing citations for travel management violations associated with the 2005 Travel Management Rule at 36 CFR 261.13. The Forest has one OVH Ranger, as well as numerous permanent staff trained as Forest Protection Officers (FPO), who have limited law enforcement authority and responsibilities compared to LEOs, but are capable of writing citations. All other Forest Service employees (both temporary and permanent) have some training as well as the responsibility to know the rules, observe and record situations, and report suspected violations as they go about their normal duties.

Violation Notices are tools to discourage inappropriate actions. Reporting of travel plan violations is one element of the Forest's annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report. Monitoring reports from 1991-2013, including Item 28 – Off-Highway Vehicle Effects on Lands, are part of the project record {Project File folder 'forest_plan_and_monitoring,' Project File documents FPMON-003 to 025, and 030 to 036.pdf}. A chart indicating the number of travel-related violations from 2004 –2011 can be found in the Project File {Project File document REC-057.pdf}.

The Forest has the ability to change priorities to increase law enforcement patrols depending upon the allocated funds and Forest emphasis items. This would most likely occur through two options. First, the Forest can determine which programs, such as developed recreation, travel management enforcement, and wildlife management, should be emphasized, and allocate the funds to accomplish objectives related to those priorities. Another method is to prioritize the work of existing permanent staff so that there is

increased emphasis on enforcement of travel management violations. The decision associated with this travel planning analysis would not affect the number of law enforcement personnel on the Forest.

Educating forest users about new travel management rules and regulations will be key to the success of the implementation of the decision for the Travel Management Planning Project. Prevention of violations is more desirable than apprehending violators. Many actions can be taken to prevent inadvertent violations of travel restrictions. These include 1) providing a clear, easy to understand MVUM and OSVUM, 2) educating the public to use and carry the MVUM and OSVUM with them; 3) improving trail signing showing travel restrictions, 4) designing a recreational road and trail system that helps people stay on the designated routes, and 5) use FPOs to educate visitors and enforce the travel plan. Law enforcement can serve as an education tool to produce positive travel management on the Forest.

Another education tool, first implemented on the Bitterroot National Forest in 2010, is the "Ride the Right Trail Program," which teaches OHV ethics, conduct, and safety to 6th graders in the Bitterroot Valley. The first year it was conducted, over 500 students participated through a partnership between Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the Ravalli County Off Road User Association, and the Forest Service. The objective of this program was clearly stated by one of the teachers whose class participated in the session: "I thought it would be beneficial for the students to see and hear what responsible use is and what it isn't. It's great to reach them at this age because they're beginning to grasp and understand what it means to use and protect the land that we all use and love. It's an important lesson to learn and most of the students are recreationalists already, so it's good to get the educational message out there." The Forest will continue to present this program annually within the Valley.

The Forest Service maintains cooperative relationships with many state and local law enforcement agencies that provide mutual support across jurisdictional boundaries. The 2005 Travel Management Rule provides a consistent framework for enforcing travel management regulations, including provision for a motor vehicle use map.

3.2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The effects analysis for the Recreation and Trails resource is both quantitative and qualitative. The change in the miles of roads and trails, or other changes in use designation, provide a quantitative look at project effects by alternative. The extent of effects on travel routes and other recreation opportunities is necessarily a qualitative assessment based on past Forest visitor patterns, historical trends, and professional judgment based on experience of the recreation specialists completing this analysis. The environmental consequences section will address both motorized and nonmotorized summer and over-snow use.

A. Summer Issue

The designation of motorized routes affects motorized and nonmotorized recreation opportunities by altering the amount, type, and season of motorized and nonmotorized routes.

Indicators:

- Miles of motorized routes (roads and trails) by vehicle type and season of use
- Miles of nonmotorized routes within the analysis area (does not include the Selway-Bitterroot, Frank Church-River of No Return, and Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness areas)
- Acres of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), by setting
- Miles of motorized routes within each ROS setting on the Forest by Management Area (MA)

Tables 3.2-10 and 3.2-11 show the measurement indicators for this issue by alternative for summer. Also, please refer to Appendices G, H, and I to the FEIS. Appendix G shows the routes which were screened for the DEIS; Appendix H shows the changes to routes between the DEIS and the FEIS; and Appendix I shows the proposed designations for all routes, including those which were not screened.

Table 3.2- 10: Measurement Indicators for this Issue by Alternative for Summer

Measurement Indicator	Alternative 1	Alternative 2 (Existing Condition)	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Miles of motorized routes (roads and trails) by vehicle type and season of use	Road miles open YL: 856 Road miles open S: 627 <50" miles open YL: 36 <50" miles open S: 559 <50" miles open S: 10[1] Motorcycle miles open YL: 84 Motorcycle miles open S: 121	Road miles open YL: 897 Road miles open S: 636 <50" miles open YL: 110 <50" miles open S: 550 Motorcycle miles open YL: 330 Motorcycle miles open S: 78	Road miles open YL: 883 Road miles open S: 644 <50" miles open YL: 72 <50" miles open S: 597 <50" miles open S: 10[1] Motorcycle miles open YL: 290 Motorcycle miles open S: 187	Road miles open YL: 585 Road miles open S: 496 <50" miles open YL: 10 <50" miles open S: 116 Motorcycle miles open YL: 6 Motorcycle miles open S: 10
Miles of nonmotorized routes within the analysis area (does not include Designated Wilderness)	329 miles of trails 540 miles of roads	143 miles of trails 422 miles of roads	40 miles of trails 443 miles of roads	570 miles of trails 1,373 miles of roads
Acres of ROS, by setting	Primitive Acres: 583,518 SPNM Acres: 226,690 SPM Acres: 289,051 RNA Acres: 483,497 Rural Acres: 9,717	Primitive Acres: 583,518 SPNM Acres: 226,688 SPM Acres: 289,052 RNA Acres: 483,497 Rural Acres: 9,717	Primitive Acres: 583,518 SPNM Acres: 226,752 SPM Acres: 185,743 RNA Acres: 587,011 Rural Acres: 9,717	Primitive Acres: 583,518 SPNM Acres: 448,388 SPM Acres: 67,352 RNA Acres: 483,767 Rural Acres: 9,717

1 These include connectors and a new trail which will require separate NEPA analysis and decision

YL (yearlong); S (Seasonally); Primitive (P); Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM); Semi-Primitive Nonmotorized (SPNM); Roaded Natural (RN); Rural (R);

Table 3.2-11 shows the number of miles of motorized routes in each management area by ROS:

Table 3.2- 11: Miles of Motorized Routes within each Management Area

Mgmt Area	ROS Emphasis By MA	ROS Type	Alt. 1 Miles of Motorized Routes in ROS/MA (Change in miles from Existing Condition)	Alt. 2 Miles of Motorized Routes in ROS/MA	Alt. 3 Miles of Motorized Routes in ROS/MA (Change in miles from Existing Condition)	Alt. 4 Miles of Motorized Routes in ROS/MA (Change in miles from Existing Condition)
1	RN	R/RN	613 miles (-39)	652 miles	669 miles (+17)	321 miles (-331)
1		SPM	47 miles (-17)	64 miles	65 miles (+1)	15 miles (-49)
1		SPNM	1 miles or (-7)	8 miles	8 miles (0)	1 mile (-7)
1	TOTAL		661 miles (-63)	724 miles	742 miles (+18)	337 miles (-387)
2	RN	R/RN	741 miles (-64)	805 miles	790 miles (-15)	358 miles (-447)
2		SPM	19 miles (-6)	25 miles	25 miles (0)	14 miles (-11)
2		SPNM	2 miles (0)	2 miles	2 miles (0)	1 mile (-1)
2	TOTAL		762 miles (-70)	832 miles	817 miles (-15)	373 miles (-459)
3a	RN	R/RN	352 miles (-23)	375 miles	379 miles (+4)	200 miles (-175)
3a		SPM	15 miles (-9)	24 miles	24 miles (0)	8 miles (-16)
3a		SPNM	7 miles (0)	7 miles	7 miles (0)	6 miles (-1)
3a	TOTAL		374 miles (-32)	406 miles	410 miles (+4)	214 miles (-192)
3c	RN	R/RN	34 miles (-4)	37 miles	37 miles (0)	24 miles (-13)
3c		SPM	1 mile (0)	1 mile	1 mile (0)	1 mile (0)
3c		SPNM	3 miles (0)	3 miles	3 miles (0)	2 miles (-1)
3c	TOTAL		38 miles (-4)	41 miles	41 miles	27 miles (-14)
5	SPNM/SPM	R/RN	51 miles (-23)	74 miles	78 miles (+4)	30 miles (-44)
5		SPM	75 miles (-58)	133 miles	153 miles (+20)	2 miles (-131)
5		SPNM	2 miles (-04)	6 miles	6 miles (0)	1 mile (-5)
5	TOTAL		128 miles (-85)	213 miles	237 miles (+24)	33 miles (-180)
6	P/SP	P	0 miles (0)	0 miles	2 miles or (+2)	0 miles (0)
6		RN	1 mile (-4)	5 miles	8 miles (+3)	1 mile (-4)
6		SPM	7 miles (-26)	33 miles	41 miles (+8)	0 miles(-33)
6		SPNM	0 miles (-4)	4 miles	15 miles (+11)	0 miles (-4)
6	TOTAL		8 miles (-34)	42 miles	66 miles (+24)	1 (-41)

Mgmt Area	ROS Emphasis By MA	ROS Type	Alt. 1 Miles of Motorized Routes in ROS/MA (Change in miles from Existing Condition)	Alt. 2 Miles of Motorized Routes in ROS/MA	Alt. 3 Miles of Motorized Routes in ROS/MA (Change in miles from Existing Condition)	Alt. 4 Miles of Motorized Routes in ROS/MA (Change in miles from Existing Condition)
8a	Manage w/ Adjacent MA	RN	50 miles (-5)	55 miles	65 miles (+10)	17 miles (-38)
8a		SPM	7 miles (-4)	11 miles	11 miles (0)	None (-11)
8a		SPNM	2 miles (-1)	3 miles	3 miles (0)	1 mile (-2)
8a	TOTAL		59 miles (-10)	69 miles	79 miles (+10)	18 miles (-51)
8b	Manage w/ Adjacent MA	RN	14 miles (+2)	12 miles	14 miles (+2)	7 miles (-5)
8b		SPM	1 mile (0)	1 mile	1 mile (0)	1 mile (0
8b	TOTAL		15 miles (+2)	13 miles	15 miles (+2)	8 miles (-5)
9	Manage w/ Adjacent MA	RN	3 miles (-1)	4 miles	4 miles (0)	3 miles (-1)
9		SPM	1 mile (0)	1 mile	1 mile (0)	None (-1)
9	TOTAL		4 miles (-1)	5 miles	5 miles (0)	3 miles (-2)

MA 3b, which is not listed on Table 3.2-11, is located within the analysis area (see Chapter 1, Table 1-6). Its ROS setting is Roaded Natural; however, this MA does not show up on ROS maps because it is managed for riparian habitat, and holds the highest concentration of resource values on the Forest; therefore, no ROS data for MA 3b exists. MAs 10, 11a, and 11b, which are also not listed on Table 3.2-1, are similarly located within the analysis area. They do not have ROS settings as they include National Recreation and National Scenic and Historic Trails, and developed recreation sites with their own set of management requirements.

Budget and Affordability

In addition to the three measurement indicators described above, the estimated costs of maintaining and improving trails, and the Forest's ability to fund the costs, were added to the FEIS analysis based on comments received on the DEIS.

As noted in the 2005 Travel Management Rule, p. 68281, "Section 212.55(a) of the proposed and final rule include as a criterion for designation 'the need for maintenance and administration of roads, trails and areas that would arise if the uses under consideration are designated; and the availability of resources for that maintenance and administration.' The Department [USDA Forest Service] believes, however, that this determination involves the exercise of judgment and discretion on the part of the responsible official. At times, resources are scarce, and the Department does not believe that this scarcity should lead to blanket closures of NFS lands to recreational users."

The Forest reviews its trail system annually in order to prioritize work, which is based on factors including weather events or health and safety issues which change over time, sometimes within a single year. Therefore, it is not uncommon for work plans to change many times within a season to adjust to what is being seen on the ground. Targets for trail maintenance and improvements accomplishment are established annually (see Table 3.2-5), and while the Bitterroot National Forest trail staff has met or exceeded the targets for operation, maintenance, and improvement each of the past seven years, this does not imply that all the miles within the system will be maintained on an annual basis; this is neither required nor realistic. Please refer to Chapter 3, Sections 3.1 (Transportation) and 3.4 (Economic and Social) of this FEIS for additional information regarding costs related to the road system.

As with other changes proposed under the travel management alternatives, the pace of implementation would depend on budgets and how travel management implementation compares with other Bitterroot National Forest management priorities.

A commenter on the Travel Management Planning Project DEIS asked the interdisciplinary (ID) team to consider a road/trails maintenance model developed by Dr. Wing at the Forest Engineering Department, Oregon State University. The ID team's Trail Specialist reviewed the model, and determined that its maintenance frequency is not consistent with what is used by Region 1 of the Forest Service, as every mile of trail is not maintained on an annual basis, nor will every mile of a certain maintenance level receive the same level of effort or attention. For additional information regarding the Wing model, please refer to {Project File folder 'transportation,' Project file document TRANS-003.pdf}.

The following table, Table 3.2-12, compares the trail MVUM codes by alternative with the proposed miles of motorized trail open, yearlong, and seasonally by alternative, with the associated maintenance costs:

Table 3.2- 12: Miles of Trails and Estimated Maintenance Cost

MVUM Code	Alt. 1 miles/cost	Alt. 2 miles/cost	Alt. 3 miles/cost	Alt. 4 miles/cost
7 – Trails Open to Vehicles 50" or Less in Width, Yearlong	36/$27,000	110/$82,500	72/$54,000	10/$7,500
8 – Trails open to Vehicles 50" or Less in Width, Seasonally	559/$279,500	550/$275,000	597/$298,500	116/$58,000

MVUM Code	Alt. 1 miles/cost	Alt. 2 miles/cost	Alt. 3 miles/cost	Alt. 4 miles/cost
7 – Trails Open to Vehicles 50" or Less in Width, Yearlong	36/$27,000	110/$82,500	72/$54,000	10/$7,500
9 – Trails open to Motorcycles, Yearlong	84/$27,300	330/$107,250	290/$94,250	6/$1,950
10- Trails open to Motorcycles, Seasonally	121/$30,250	78/$19,500	187/$46,750	10/$2,500
Total	**800/$364,050**	**1,068/$484,250**	**1,146/$493,500**	**142/$69,950**
28 - Proposed trails[1] open to vehicles 50" or less in width, seasonally	10/$170,000	0/0	10/$170,000	0/0

[1] These include connectors and a new trail which will require additional NEPA analysis and decision

Please refer to Section 3.2.4, Environmental Consequences, for the comparison by alternative of cost estimate to maintain the miles of trails proposed by alternative.

B. Over-Snow Use Issue

Designating acres open to over-snow vehicle use impacts recreational experiences.

Indicator:

Total acres open to over-snow vehicle use:

Table 3.2- 13: Comparison by Alternatives by Indicator Relevant to Recreation Resource Over-Snow Season

Designating Acres Open To Over-Snow Vehicle Use Impacts Recreational Experiences	Alt. 1	Alt. 2 (Existing Condition)	Alt. 3	Alt. 4
Indicator – Acres Open to Snowmobiling	**Acres**	**Acres**	**Acres**	**Acres**
Open yearlong	522,592	699,884	704,563	318,582
Seasonally open	41,856	49,097	49,097	41,856
Open Subtotal	564,448	748,981	753,660	360,438
Closed yearlong	1,030,696	846,163	841,484	1,234,706
Total acres	1,595,144	1,595,144	1,595,144	1,595,144

Background

The process used to analyze over-snow vehicle use was similar to the summer analysis process; however, the major difference was that over-snow use was analyzed by acres rather than "routes." The Forest conducted mapping and review by resource specialists prior to compiling all data into a Forest-wide analysis. The Forest acknowledges there is a difference between the acres open to over-snow vehicles and the acres useable by such vehicles. The acres not useable would be those with physical constraints such as rivers, streams, steep rocky cliffs, or dense forested areas that are so heavily timbered that a snowmobile or other vehicle could not be maneuvered through them. It would also include elevation areas where insufficient snow accumulates for use by over-snow vehicles. Other areas that might not be suitable for over-snow vehicle use would be the areas burned in wildfires, due to the downfall of snags.

This difference is difficult to measure, however, and cannot be calculated or shown on a map.

Although the project area is outside of Designated Wilderness, those 743,791 acres of Designated Wilderness are available to those desiring a nonmotorized over-snow experience and are included in the "closed yearlong" acres in the table above.

The opportunities available for recreation by over-snow vehicles are shown by the number of acres open to over-snow use in each alternative. Both groomed trails and backcountry areas are desired by over-snow users to accommodate varying abilities of riders. The type, amount, and location of over-snow vehicle

areas influence recreation opportunities and the quality of the recreation experience. Through this process, the Forest hopes to provide an array of over-snow vehicle recreation experiences, while mitigating conflicts of use between the motorized and nonmotorized user and wintering wildlife.

For additional information, please reference the paper titled "Process for Selecting Routes to be Considered for Travel Designation Changes in the Travel Management Planning Project Proposed Action, DEIS, and FEIS/ROD" {Project File folder 'process,' Project File document PROCESS-001.pdf}.

Settlement Agreement

In March 2007, a settlement was reached between various entities and the U.S. Forest Service regarding the Agency's management of WSAs in Montana, including the Blue Joint and Sapphire on the Bitterroot National Forest. The understanding was that the new travel management plans could either resolve any dispute between the parties or serve to narrow any remaining areas of dispute regarding management of the WSAs (WSA Settlement Agreement March 2007) {Project File folder 'public_involvement_pre-nepa_2005_09_2007,' Project File document PUBLIC-064.pdf}. The agreement detailing the settlement stipulated that the Forest Service was to issue travel management decisions for over-snow use for all WSAs for which a travel management decision has not been issued since 2000, including the Blue Joint and Sapphire areas.

The agreement states that the travel management decisions shall address summer and over-snow use of trail and off-trail areas within each WSA, based upon applicable law and policy including policy currently set forth in FSM Section 2329. And, pending completion of the travel management plans for the WSAs, the Forest Service shall manage those areas in accordance with applicable law and policy including, but not limited to, the Montana Wilderness Study Act ((PL 95-150;91 Stat 1243 (1977)), and FSM, Section 2329.

C. Effects Common to All Action Alternatives – Summer

- Motorized recreational vehicle use would contribute to noise, which has the potential to impact some visitors' recreation experiences
- Closure of some motorized routes would concentrate use into smaller areas, which would lead to visitor displacement, and negatively affect some visitor's recreation experiences
- Parking of motorized vehicles off of designated routes would be limited to a distance of 30 feet from the edge of the route surface. This would minimize unauthorized route creation for parking and resource impacts
- Motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping would be prohibited within 30 feet of any flowing stream, pond, lake, marsh, or wetland to protect sensitive soils, rare plants, water quality, and fish habitat. This would affect motorized access to some of the historically-used dispersed camping sites throughout the Forest. There would likely be some resistance resulting from this action because people are naturally drawn to camping adjacent to water. Camping next to water sources would continue to be permitted; access, however, would be nonmotorized means
- Dust and noise associated with roads and trails could negatively affect the dispersed camping experience
- Implementation of any action alternative under the new 2005 Travel Management Rule would result in motorized vehicles being restricted to designated roads, trails, and areas. The concept of regulating motorized vehicles would change to "closed unless designated open." The Forest Service would issue a motor vehicle use map (MVUM) to display routes open to motorized travel. It would also post route number signs on the open routes to correspond with numbers shown on the MVUM. If the route number sign falls down or is vandalized, the responsibility for knowing that the route is open falls upon the motor vehicle operator; the MVUM will be the controlling legal enforcement tool, and operators of motor vehicles will be responsible for complying with the MVUM. Onsite posting of signs is not essential to enforce the new travel plan; however, signing would continue to be used to minimize inadvertent violation of restrictions

- Ø Conflicts between motorized and nonmotorized uses could occur on all designated routes
- Ø Better control of ATV travel is expected to reduce potential resource impacts

D. Effects Common to All Action Alternatives – Over-Snow

- Ø Conflict of use and safety issues between motorized and nonmotorized over-snow users could continue and possibly escalate if users choose to recreate in the same area
- Ø Over-snow vehicle use would contribute to noise, which has the potential to impact some visitors' recreation experiences

E. Direct and Indirect Effects – Summer and Over-Snow

Alternative 1: Summer

Refer to Table 3.2-10 for a comparison of the indicators for the Recreation and Trails resource by alternative for summer. Also, please refer to Appendices G, H, and I to the FEIS: Appendix G shows the routes screened for the DEIS; Appendix H shows the changes to routes between the DEIS and the FEIS; and Appendix I shows the proposed designations for all routes, including those which were not screened.

Alternative 1 would designate 2,293 miles of routes for use by motorized vehicles. This would represent a 308 mile (12 percent) decrease from **Alternative 2**. Those unauthorized routes that are not designated as open would be closed. The motorized routes would include 856 miles of road open yearlong and 627 miles of roads open seasonally to motorized travel. This is a reduction of about 41 miles of road open yearlong and 9 miles of road open seasonally compared to **Alternative 2**. A 0.4 mile connector is proposed between Roads #62484 and #62487 for highway legal vehicles yearlong. This leaves approximately 36 miles of trails open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width yearlong and 559 miles of trails open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width seasonally. This is a reduction of 74 miles for those trails 50 inches or less in width open yearlong, and an increase of 9 miles for those trails 50 inches or less in width open seasonally compared to **Alternative 2.**

The miles of trails open to motorcycles yearlong would decrease to 84 in **Alternative 1**. This represents a decrease of 246 miles from **Alternative 2**. The miles of trails open to motorcycles, seasonally, would increase by 43 miles to 121, compared to 78 under **Alternative 2**, which would make up for some of the loss of yearlong trail miles.

Alternative 1 proposes to designate approximately 30 miles of unauthorized routes on the MVUM. About 18 miles would be proposed to be designated as ATV trails seasonally; approximately 1 mile would be designated to be open yearlong. Some of these routes would connect existing roads and trails.

Designating these unauthorized routes as trails would provide an enhanced ATV experience for the public, as planning would be implemented to move some routes to more sustainable locations according to trail specifications, thus enhancing safety, the recreation opportunity, and protection of resources. Those with families wishing to stay off designated roads that are open to passenger vehicles would appreciate these opportunities. The priority for trail reconstruction and relocation will be based on public safety, resource damage, and type of use.

Motorcyclists would be able to use these motorized routes on the Forest, but these routes do not provide a similar experience since they are ATV width to road-width routes rather than single track trails.

Approximately 10 miles of the routes proposed to be designated for ATVs would not be shown on the MVUM until separate site-specific NEPA analysis and decisions, associated with relocating the routes to more sustainable locations to address erosion concerns, are completed and they exist on the ground.

Additionally, 11 miles of unauthorized routes would be proposed to be designated for use as motorcycle trails: 10 miles would be open seasonally, and 1 mile would be open yearlong {Project File folder 'unauthorized_trails,' Project File document UAT-003.pdf}.

Designating some of the two-wheeled motorized trails as nonmotorized would impact those expert riders that were able to maneuver the steep narrow trails. The closure of some motorized routes would concentrate use onto smaller areas depending upon the type and amount of use a route receives. Differing levels of motorized route designation would result in visitor displacement and affect visitor satisfaction. Some visitors may feel offended or defensive if the activity they prefer to participate in is deemed as inappropriate by others or if their experience is disrupted or undesirable resulting in conflict of uses.

Once unauthorized routes are designated, the Forest Service would be able to expend funds on them for maintenance and improvement, which are intended to ensure the integrity of travel routes.

The opportunity to use some of these trails would change to nonmotorized use, but the use of the trail is not lost. Nonmotorized visitors could still hike, ride bicycles, or horseback ride on these trails as well as all nonmotorized areas on the Forest.

For a listing of the unauthorized routes proposed to be designated on the MVUM for **Alternative 1**, please refer to Appendix K to the FEIS.

Motorized Wheeled Vehicle Use for Dispersed Camping

Under **Alternative 1**, motorized wheeled vehicle access for dispersed camping would be limited to 300 feet from the centerline on either side of a designated motorized route. Additionally, corridors for motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping would be extended to 20 campsites that are greater than 300 feet from a designated road or trail, as identified on the maps of the alternative. The campsites are listed in Table 3.2-14, below, and include areas such as Hughes Creek, Tin Cup, Watchtower, Balsam Creek, and Lost Horse Creek. Motorized vehicle access to these sites would be permitted, as there are no resource concerns, and they have been used by visitors in the past. Access to these sites should be provided so visitors can continue to use and enjoy these dispersed areas.

Table 3.2- 14: Dispersed Camping Areas Greater than 300 Feet from a Designated Route

Number on Alternative Map	Name
1	Balsam Creek
2	Balsam Creek
3	Black's Crossing
4	Hughes Creek
5	Hughes Creek
6	Lost Horse – Road #429
7	Lost Horse - Road #429
8	Near Junction with Road #75 and Skalkaho Highway
9	Road #273
10	Road #273
11	Road #273
12	Road #273
13	Road # 639
14	Overwhich
15	Salt Creek
16	Salt Creek
17	Tin Cup
18	Upper West Fork
19	Watchtower
20	Watchtower

Alternative 1 would provide similar motorized vehicle use for dispersed camping as **Alternative 2.** The public would continue to generally have the same motorized vehicle access currently available to dispersed campsites, but cross-country routes between dispersed campsites would be prohibited. Motorized vehicle use routes leading to dispersed campsites would be monitored for route proliferation and resource impacts.

Several factors suggest a range of minor-to-moderate future increases in motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping. Most sites that have desirable campsite characteristics have already been established by repeated use, limiting future increases in the number of motorized routes to access them. Expansion of new and existing sites is expected, but would likely be limited by terrain features including standing and down trees, large rocks, thick vegetation, water features, narrow stream canyons, and abrupt topographic changes. Existing dispersed sites typically have a suitable motorized access route commonly used to get to the site.

The Forest will continue to monitor the emergence of new dispersed camping sites that are accessed by motorized vehicles, as well as changes at existing sites. Sites where motorized access routes result in excessive effects to resources will be altered or closed.

Some of the routes that would be closed to motorized vehicle use for dispersed camping under this alternative, as the routes which provide the access to the sites are proposed to be closed, would be in the Tin Cup and Magruder Corridor areas. These motorized vehicle routes would be rehabilitated and closed to motorized access for dispersed camping. There would be a separate NEPA document for this activity due to ground- disturbing activities.

The total number of sites used for dispersed camping, and associated motorized routes, is expected to increase gradually over time. Firewood cutting following beetle or fire events is expected to open up more access routes to dispersed camp sites.

The Magruder Corridor and some sites in the Lost Horse Corridor are areas where parking at dispersed campsites occurs within 30 feet of water, which would be prohibited under **Alternative 1**. However, effects due to motorized vehicle access to these sites can be, and have been, mitigated by placing large boulders to prevent vehicles from parking too close to water, and using gravel to harden areas to prevent surface erosion; in some cases, access routes and parking areas have been moved or closed. Closing access to these sites would require separate NEPA as ground disturbance would most likely occur.

Those who are dispersed camping may experience dust or noise from use on the designated route. Damage to natural resources should decrease due to conditions of use and parking 30 feet from a stream.

There would be no motorized vehicle use to dispersed camping in RWAs in **Alternative 1** on the Forest. In addition, in the Lolo and Swift Creek IRAs, there would also be no motorized dispersed camping opportunities because there are no motorized routes available in these areas under this alternative.

Motorized/Mechanical Transport Use Opportunities

A variety of roads and trails make up the proposed routes to be designated for motorized use in **Alternative 1**. Users desiring off-road (trail) opportunities would experience changes with the closure of unauthorized routes and routes closed for resource reasons. Motorized users who yearn for challenging experiences may find a road-based system does not meet their desires. Increased use of these designated routes may result in higher maintenance needs and eventually lead to closure if resource damage becomes too great.

Recreational experiences between the motorized users could be impacted when travel routes are shared with nonmotorized uses. Some roads would be restricted to vehicles 50 inches or less in width to provide the desired trail experience. Often times, these roads have native surfaces or have become grassed in, and can provide a narrower trail experience that some users prefer. Over time, these routes would narrow additionally as vegetation naturally encroaches on the road.

Although there would be plentiful opportunities for motorized recreation for vehicles 50 inches or less in width as a result of restricting motorized access on some National Forest System roads under this alternative, conflict of uses could continue to occur on all designated routes.

Implementation of **Alternative 1** would provide a mix of opportunities for motorized recreation on the Forest. It provides multiple routes designated for public motorized use, and includes numerous miles of motorized trail for use by vehicles 50 inches or less in width. Trail #313 is one of these trails that would provide this type of experience.

Under **Alternative 1**, trail vehicles (ATVs and motorcycles) would access Trail #313 by utilizing a new proposed route, TR-FEIS-01, (please refer to Appendix H to the FEIS for additional information) to be constructed between Roads #13102 and #13154, (about 1 mile north of Cinnabar Saddle). From its access via Road #13154, Trail #313 is proposed to be open from 06/16-08/31 as a double track trail to Sawmill Saddle, approximately 12.7 miles. This proposed trail would be shown on the map of Alternative 1. It will be subject to separate site-specific NEPA analysis and decision. It will not be shown on the MVUM until completed.

Another 2.5 miles, from near the intersection of Trail #313 with Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Road #8671 to the intersection with Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Road #8107 (at the Obrien Mine), is proposed to be open yearlong to double-track motorized use. A total of 15.2 miles of Trail #313 is being proposed in **Alternative 1** to be open as motorized double-track trail.

Alternative 1 would negatively affect motorized/mechanical transport users by decreasing the miles of routes available to motorcycles and bicycles in the Selway-Bitterroot and Blue Joint recommended wilderness areas (RWAs). There would be a reduction of 39.7 miles of motorized trails and 67.8 miles of mechanized transport when compared to **Alternative 2.** While motorcycles and bicycles may not always have physical impacts on the landscape, prohibiting their use, along with motorized vehicles, from RWAs acknowledges there are other, social effects to Wilderness attributes associated with these types of uses. Please refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3 (Recommended Wilderness), of this FEIS for further discussion.

In response to the many comments received on the DEIS concerning trails that were proposed to be closed to motorized use because they lead to Designated Wilderness, 7 miles of the 40 that were proposed to be closed would remain open to single track vehicles in **Alternative 1** in the FEIS. These include Sweathouse Creek (Trail #121), Gash Creek (Trail #122), Holloway Lake (Trail #393), and Hole in the Wall (Trail #434).

The overall total trail miles available for mechanical transport users, forest wide, would be 1,222 miles in **Alternative 1**, a six mile increase when compared to 1,216 miles in **Alternative 2**. See Table 3.2-15, Bicycles – Where Permitted and Miles of Trail Available, by Alternative.

Table 3.2- 15: Bicycles – Where Permitted and Miles of Trail Available, by Alternative

Alternative #1	Alt. 1 Miles	Alternative #2	Alt. 2 Miles	Alternative #3	Alt. 3 Miles	Alternative #4	Alt. 4 Miles
Any Trail Open to Motorized	809	Any Trail Open to Motorized	1,069	Any Trail Open to Motorized	1,156	Any Trail Open to Motorized	142
Plus		Plus		Plus		Plus	
Any system trail that is closed to motorized and outside Designated and Recommended Wilderness (i.e., bikes will be allowed on a trail in a WSA or IRA that is closed to motorized)	299	Any system trail that is closed to motorized and outside Designated Wilderness (i.e., permitted on trails closed to motorized in WSAs, IRAs and Recommended Wilderness)	147	Any system trail that is closed to motorized and outside Designated Wilderness (i.e., permitted on trails closed to motorized in WSAs, IRAs and Recommended Wilderness)	79	Any system trail that is closed to motorized and outside a WSA and outside Recommended Wilderness and outside Designated Wilderness (i.e., permitted in IRAs and in portions of Sapphire and Blue Joint IRAs that are NOT part of the WSA)	412
Plus		Plus		Plus		Plus	
Any closed OHV road (coincident route) that is outside Recommended Wilderness	114	Any closed OHV road(coincident route)	N.A.	Any closed OHV road(coincident route)	47	Any closed OHV road (coincident route) that is outside Recommended Wilderness and outside a WSA.	500
TOTAL MILES	**1,222**		**1,216**		**1,282**		**1,054**

Under **Alternative 1**, none of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail #9 is proposed to be open for motorized use.

Nonmotorized Opportunities

Trail miles available for nonmotorized use would increase from the existing condition of 143 miles to 329 miles with **Alternative 1**. This represents an increase of 186 miles (130 percent) compared to **Alternative 2**. Currently there are 422 miles of closed roads available to nonmotorized use; **Alternative 1** proposes to close an additional 118 miles of roads to motorized use. This represents a 28 percent increase to 540 miles, compared to **Alternative 2**. The designation of motorized opportunities, particularly the designation by vehicle class, may affect nonmotorized opportunities.

The miles of open roads in selected IRAs decrease from 9 to 5 miles when compared to **Alternative 2**, while the miles of open trails would decrease from 312 to 159 miles, a decrease of 153 miles. Closing some motorized trails within selected IRAs is proposed to provide large blocks of quiet areas, and to protect those attributes that have been identified by the nonmotorized user as opportunities for providing solitude, tranquility, and a more primitive recreation experience, as well as benefits to wildlife, which would include lack of disturbance and increased security. Providing a quiet, nonmotorized opportunity requires a block of land large enough to buffer noise from adjacent areas where motorized recreation may occur.

Large blocks of quiet areas enhance the recreation experience for users such as hunters, fisherman, hikers, and horseback riders. These areas allow the user to experience solitude and quiet in a more remote recreation setting. See Table 3.2-16, Summary of Miles of Open Road and Motorized Trails Within IRAs by Alternative:

Table 3.2- 16: Summary of Miles of Open Road and Motorized Trails within IRAs by Alternative

	Alternative 1		**Alternative 2 (Existing Condition)**		**Alternative 3**		**Alternative 4**	
IRA Name	**Miles Open Road**	**Miles Motorized Trail**	**Miles Open Road**	**Miles Motorized Trail**	**Miles Open Road**	**Miles Motorized Trail**	**Miles Open Road**	**Miles Motorized Trail**
Allan Mountain	0.29	63.82	0.29	92.51	0.29	94.49	0.00	0.02
Blue Joint	1.32	36.95	4.52	61.50	4.52	61.50	0.98	0.00
Lolo Creek	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Needle Creek	0.00	1.39	0.00	1.39	0.00	1.39	0.00	0.00
North Big Hole	0.00	0.29	0.00	3.27	0.00	3.27	0.00	0.00
Sapphire	0.57	10.99	0.59	31.52	0.59	43.52	0.57	0.00
Selway-Bitterroot	2.68	9.78	2.68	29.45	2.68	57.56	2.36	0.00
Sleeping Child	0.26	35.46	0.26	35.90	0.26	37.70	0.26	1.56
Stony Mountain	0.13	0.00	0.83	47.88	0.83	53.27	0.13	0.00
Swift Creek	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.93	0.00	0.93	0.00	0.00
Tolan Creek	0.00	0.07	0.00	7.46	0.00	7.46	0.00	0.00
Total Miles	5.25	158.75	9.17	311.81	9.17	361.09	4.30	1.58

Hikers and stock users desiring nonmotorized cross country travel to remote destinations, free from noise and vehicle pollution, would not encounter motorized vehicles unless those users were violating the designation. Nonmotorized recreation opportunities would improve under **Alternative 1.**

As a result of comments received on the DEIS regarding Trail #313, changes to **Alternative 1** were proposed to prohibit all motorized travel from Eightmile Saddle to its intersection with Road #13154 (the

newly proposed entry point for motorized access for **Alternative 1**). From Sawmill Saddle to where Trail #313 intersects Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Road #8671, Trail #313 is proposed to be closed to all motorized use in **Alternative 1.** Approximately 10 miles of this proposed closure is required in order to be consistent with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest's nonmotorized designation for the area.

Also, in **Alternative 1**, the section of Trail #313 south of the access to Obrien Mine (Road #8107) to the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness is proposed to be closed to all motorized use in order to be consistent with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest's travel plans for this area.

Approximately 59.2 miles of the Sapphire Divide Trail, between Eightmile Saddle and where it enters the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness are proposed in Alternative 1 to be closed to all motorized use.

Under **Alternative 1**, Trail #39 (Chain of Lakes) would be closed to all motorized use, moving the area towards one of the Recreation standards for MA 5, stated on III-37 (6) "*Pending resolution by Congress, that portion of the management area within the boundary of Montana Study Act areas will be administered according to the goals and standards established for Management Area 6"* (USDA Forest Service 1987a). The goal for MA 6 is *"Pending action by Congress, manage to maintain the presently existing wilderness characteristics and potential for inclusion in the wilderness system."* Refer to Section 3.3.4 Environmental Consequences, Sapphire Wilderness Study Area Assessment, for additional discussion of Trail #39 (Chain of Lakes).

In **Alternative 1**, the entire Trail #9, CDNST managed by the Bitterroot National Forest, approximately 25.3 miles, would be available exclusively for nonmotorized use.

ROS

There would be no change from the current ROS settings in **Alternative 1**. Although there may be changes in the mileage available in the various MAs, the ROS designations would not change.

Budget and Affordability

The estimated cost to maintain the miles of motorized trails under **Alternative 1** is $364,050. This would represent a decrease of $120,200 (25 percent) compared to **Alternative 2** (Table 3.2-12). This cost would be adequately covered by the historical level of funding, ranging from $456,607 to $965,051, available for the National Forest System trails on the Bitterroot National Forest for the years from 2007–2013. This estimate assumes that all trails would be maintained annually and funding would remain static, but, as mentioned above, trail work is reviewed annually, and prioritized by various factors such as wildfires, wind events, health, and safety issues. It is unlikely that the Forest would be able to accomplish all the work in one year as other priorities would backlog the work into future years, and the Forest's budget for trails is predicted to decrease in the upcoming years.

The 10 miles of proposed trails include connectors and new treads that would require additional NEPA analysis and further survey work; these costs are estimated at $170,000, and would be dependent on funding and other forest trail priorities at the time. These trails would become designated trails following site-specific evaluation. The overall network of routes designated for motor vehicle use would then expand, providing new opportunities for users. These designated routes would create a more sustainable trail system and will receive maintenance through agency resources and cooperative relationships.

Unauthorized routes that are not designated would be closed to motor vehicle use, which would limit opportunities for motor vehicle users but might expand opportunities for other recreational visitors seeking a nonmotorized experience.

Alternative 1: Over-Snow

Alternative 1 would provide opportunities for both motorized and nonmotorized over-snow use by retaining some of the motorized acres that are currently available for over-snow vehicle use. The acres

available for over-snow vehicle use would decrease from 748,981 to 564,448, compared to **Alternative 2**, a reduction of approximately 184,533 acres (25 percent).

As a result of comments received on the DEIS, new acres available for over-snow motorized recreation in this alternative are the Camas Lakes area. Table 3.2-13 shows the comparison of acres open to over-snow use by alternative. Groomed route mileage remains the same as the existing condition. Areas that would no longer be available for over-snow vehicle use include the Blue Joint and Selway-Bitterroot RWAs and portions of the Sapphire and Blue Joint WSAs; goat habitat in the Willow Creek and Moose Creek Areas; and portions of the Stony Mountain IRA. Those IRA acres currently closed to over-snow vehicle activities would remain closed. For additional over-snow issues and indicators, please refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.3 (Designated Wilderness, Recommended Wilderness, Inventoried Roadless Areas, and Wilderness Study Areas), of this FEIS.

Alternative 1 does not allow for over-snow vehicle use in RWAs on the Forest, as shown on the **Alternative 1** map. Currently, some recommended wilderness acres are currently closed with a Special Closure Order, and are not available for over-snow travel.

While some favorite motorized acres, including those in the Sapphire Mountains, would be reduced, the motorized user on the Forest would continue to enjoy many play acres and remote destinations. High elevation areas that remain open, such as open slopes and bowls, would continue to be heavily used by over-snow vehicle users. The loss of acres for over-snow vehicle use will concentrate users into smaller areas, potentially resulting in crowding and could displace some over-snow vehicle users to other areas on the Forest or to neighboring forests and state or private lands. Fast moving over-snow vehicles leave little accessible untracked powder for nonmotorized users which may result in conflict of use and safety issues between motorized and nonmotorized over-snow users. These conflicts of use could continue and possibly escalate if users choose to recreate in the same area. Noise impacts caused by machines would continue.

Nonmotorized users would be able to utilize the entire Forest for over-snow recreation. However, this alternative offers 1,030,696 acres available exclusively for nonmotorized opportunities.

Due to increased numbers of visitors coming into the Bitterroot National Forest and the Bitterroot Valley to ride, and by reducing motorized routes, the potential for motorized intrusions into Designated Wilderness could increase throughout the nonmotorized over-snow areas within this alternative. This could increase the need for additional law enforcement patrols in these areas.

Alternative 2 - No Action: Summer

Refer to Table 3.2-10 for a comparison of the indicators for the Recreation and Trails resource by alternative for summer. Also, please refer to Appendices G, H, and I to the FEIS: Appendix G shows the routes screened for the DEIS; Appendix H shows the changes to routes between the DEIS and the FEIS; and Appendix I shows the proposed designations for all routes, including those which were not screened.

Alternative 2 would designate 2,601 miles of routes for use by motorized vehicles. These would include 897 miles of roads open yearlong and 636 miles of roads open seasonally to motorized travel. Additionally, 110 miles of trails open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width yearlong and 550 miles of trails open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width seasonally.

Under **Alternative 2**, no additional motorized routes would be added with this project. No new proposed trails or connectors would occur, and no unauthorized routes would be designated with this alternative.

Those trails not originally designed to accommodate the type of motorized use now present would remain open and continue to sustain erosion problems.

Motorcycle users would have about 330 miles of trails open yearlong, and 78 miles of trails open seasonally.

Alternative 2 would retain the current management direction established in the 1987 Forest Plan, which is displayed on the 2005 Forest Visitor Map. It would not implement the 2005 Travel Management Rule, and would not result in a MVUM; it would defer implementing the 2005 Travel Management Rule until decisions regarding unauthorized routes can be made. The 2001 Tri-State Decision (USDI/USDA Forest Service 2001b) prohibited motorized wheeled travel on unauthorized routes established after the decision, but allowed use on such trails created prior to the decision until they are subject to NEPA analysis to determine whether they would become part of the Forest's transportation system.

Alternative 2 would not designate any unauthorized routes on the MVUM. While some trails are not recommended for ATV travel in the current Forest Plan, ATVs are permitted on all motorized trails if the route is not barricaded or signed as closed, and if the vehicle fits within the existing tread. Current management plans would continue to guide management of the project area.

Alternative 2 does not include active management of the unauthorized routes; the Forest Service cannot expend funds to maintain or improve unauthorized routes; maintenance and improvements are necessary to ensure the integrity of travel routes. Aside from the safety concern associated with poor trail conditions, resource concerns, and substandard routes, it does not meet the needs of many users. For example, some segments of unauthorized single track and/or ATV trails are on steep grades, in boggy areas, or provide no loop system for day rides. While this may satisfy the more advanced riders, the less experienced riders find themselves on trails beyond their riding abilities. Because most of these trails would not receive adequate maintenance, conditions would continue to deteriorate, resulting in resource and safety concerns.

These routes would continue to degrade as the problems go unresolved. They would be more difficult to use, and safety concerns would increase. In the long term, many of these routes would be impossible to use as erosion creates deeper ruts and exposes more rocks and may be closed for resource reasons.

In providing for an array of routes**, Alternative 2** appears to provide the widest range of travel management because it is the least restrictive. Travel management would follow the 2001 Tri-State Decision, allowing road/trail users to continue using all the roads/trails they enjoyed prior to 2001. However, a closer examination of the situation finds **Alternative 2** does not meet the intentions of a quality road/trail system.

Wheeled Motorized Vehicle Use for Dispersed Camping

The current management direction that allows motorized vehicle access for dispersed camping within 300 feet (600 foot corridor) of either side of a designated road and trail would continue under **Alternative 2**. Motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping is permitted on most areas of the Forest, including inventoried roadless areas, recommended wilderness, and wilderness study areas; it is not allowed in Designated Wilderness.

Users would lose the opportunity to use the 20 identified dispersed campsites that are greater than 300 feet from a road or trail as they are located outside the allowed motorized access corridor.

Several factors suggest a range of minor-to-moderate future increases in motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping. Most sites that have desirable campsite characteristics have already been established by repeated use, limiting future increases in the number of motorized routes to access them. Expansion of new and existing sites is expected, but would likely be limited by terrain features including standing and down trees, large rocks, thick vegetation, water features, narrow stream canyons, and abrupt topographic changes. Existing dispersed sites typically have a suitable motorized access route commonly used to get to the site.

The Forest will continue to monitor the emergence of new dispersed camping sites that are accessed by motorized vehicles, as well as changes at existing sites. Sites where motorized access routes result in excessive effects to resources will be altered or closed.

The total number of sites used for dispersed camping, and associated motorized routes, is expected to increase gradually over time. Firewood cutting following beetle or fire events is expected to open up more access routes to dispersed camp sites.

Vehicles would not be prohibited from being 30 feet away from water bodies such as flowing streams, lakes, ponds, marshes, or wetlands to protect sensitive soils, rare plants, water quality, and fish habitat. However, effects due to motorized vehicle access to these sites can be, and have been, mitigated by placing large boulders to prevent vehicles from parking too close to water, and using gravel to harden areas to prevent surface erosion such as in the Lost Horse Corridor and Skalkaho-Rye area; in some cases, access routes and parking areas have been moved or closed.

Users would experience dust or noise from use on the designated route. Damage to natural resources could continue or increase without restrictions on conditions of use.

Motorized/Mechanical Transport Use Opportunities

The National Forest System roads currently open to all forms of motorized travel would continue for a variety of recreational activities. The 2001 Tri-State Decision travel restrictions would continue to apply to cross-country travel. Those unauthorized routes created prior to 2001, which are not physically barricaded or signed as closed, and which have been used by the recreating public for motorized access, would continue to be available to ATVs that can access these routes.

The motorized opportunity on the Forest is a shared component with most motorized users. The limited amount of motorized trails open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width means that these users are mixing with full size vehicles on higher speed roads creating a safety concern. In an effort to avoid safety conflicts, ATVs and motorcycle users usually find their own places to recreate, thus creating their own trail systems. Some of these trails are along old roads that may have been used for logging or other resource activity (unauthorized roads). Some of the unauthorized routes are created from repeated use by motorized users; these can cause environmental harm if located in environmentally sensitive areas.

Trail #313 would continue to be confusing to users not knowing what sections are open to motorized and nonmotorized use. Illegal ATV use in Welcome Creek Wilderness, on the Lolo National Forest, would continue, with the potential to push further into the wilderness thus affecting those visitors looking for a nonmotorized wilderness experience. Poorly-located trails would continue to be used causing widening of trails and further erosion.

Under **Alternative 2**, Trail #39, a very popular trail, would remain open to ATVs and motorcycles resulting in continued erosion of fines and exposing more rock and widening of the trail tread. This would not move the area towards one of the Recreation standards for MA 5, stated on III-37 (6) *"Pending resolution by Congress, that portion of the management area within the boundary of Montana Study Act areas will be administered according to the goals and standards established for Management Area 6"* (USDA Forest Service 1987a). The goal for MA 6 is *"Pending action by Congress, manage to maintain the presently existing wilderness characteristics and potential for inclusion in the wilderness system."* Refer to Section 3.3.4 Environmental Consequences, Sapphire Wilderness Study Area Assessment, for additional discussion of Trail #39 (Chain of Lakes).

Miles of trail open to mechanical transport users, forest wide, would remain at 1,216 miles.

Trails within RWAs, and those leading to Designated Wilderness, would continue to be open to motorized/mechanical transport use. The miles of open road in selected IRAs would remain at 9 miles and open trails would remain at 312 miles.

The section of the Trail #9 (CDNST) from mile post 14.80 - 31.40 would remain open to motorcycles yearlong.

Nonmotorized Opportunities

There would be 143 miles of trails available for nonmotorized use and 422 miles of roads available for nonmotorized use.

Increased noise levels and user dissatisfaction would occur depending on the use the area receives. Conflict of use between motorized and nonmotorized uses would continue to occur and possibly escalate.

ROS

Alternative 2 reflects the current situation of meeting Forest Plan Standards in all management areas for all ROS designations and Forest Plan Objectives.

Budget and Affordability

The estimated cost to maintain the miles of motorized trails for **Alternative 2** would be $484,250. This cost would be sufficiently covered by the historical level of funding ranging from $456,607 to $965,051 available for the National Forest System trails on the Bitterroot National Forest for the years from 2007–2013, with the exception for 2007, with a minimum of $456,607, a shortfall of $27,643, as shown in Table 3.2-6. This estimate assumes that all trails would be maintained annually and funding would remain static, but, as mentioned previously, trail work is reviewed annually and prioritized by various factors such as wildfires, wind events, health, and safety issues. It is unlikely that the Forest would be able to accomplish all the work in one year as other priorities would backlog the work into future years, and the Forest's budget for trails is predicted to decrease in the upcoming years.

These miles of trail currently exist on the ground, and adequate maintenance is currently done annually. Those routes that provide a motorized opportunity are typically getting cleared by the various user groups.

There would be no new proposed trails or connectors thus reducing new opportunities for additional motorized trail experiences.

Alternative 2 - No Action: Over-Snow

Under **Alternative 2**, approximately 748,981 acres would remain open to over-snow vehicle use. High-elevation areas would continue to provide opportunities for unrestricted motorized use. Conflict of uses and safety issues between motorized and nonmotorized over-snow users would continue and possibly escalate. Noise impacts caused by over-snow vehicles would continue.

Over-snow vehicle use in RWAs on the Forest would continue, as shown on the **Alternative 2** map. Some recommended wilderness acres are currently closed with a special closure.

Nonmotorized users would be able to utilize the entire Forest for over-snow recreation. However, this alternative offers 846,163 acres available exclusively for nonmotorized over-snow opportunities.

Alternative 3: Summer

Refer to Table 3.2-10 for a comparison of the indicators for the Recreation and Trails resource by alternative for summer. Also, please refer to Appendices G, H, and I to the FEIS: Appendix G shows the routes screened for the DEIS; Appendix H shows the changes to routes between the DEIS and the FEIS; and Appendix I shows the proposed designations for all routes, including those which were not screened.

Alternative 3 would designate 2,683 miles of routes for use by motorized vehicles. This would represent an increase of 82 miles (3.2 percent) compared to **Alternative 2**. Those unauthorized routes that are not designated as open would be closed. The motorized routes would include 883 miles of roads open yearlong, and 644 miles of roads open seasonally. This represents a decrease of about 14 miles of road open yearlong and an increase of 8 miles of road open seasonally from **Alternative 2**. A 0.4 mile connector is proposed between Roads #62484 and #62487 for highway legal vehicles yearlong.

There would be approximately 72 miles of trails open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width yearlong, and 597 miles of trails open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width seasonally. This would represent a reduction of 38 miles for trails 50 inches or less in width open yearlong, and an increase of 47 miles for those trails 50 inches or less in width open seasonally from **Alternative 2.**

Motorcycle users would have about 290 miles of trail open yearlong and 187 miles open seasonally. This would represent a 40 mile decrease in trails open yearlong and a 109 mile increase in trails open seasonally compared to **Alternative 2**.

Alternative 3 proposes to designate 35 miles of unauthorized routes on the MVUM. About 19 miles would be proposed to be designated as ATV trails seasonally; approximately 1 mile would be designated to be open yearlong. Some of these routes would connect existing roads and trails.

About 10 miles of the routes proposed to be designated for ATVs would not be shown on the MVUM until separate site-specific NEPA analysis and decisions, associated with relocating the routes to more sustainable locations to address rutting and erosion concerns, are completed and they exist on the ground.

Designating these unauthorized routes as trails would provide an enhanced ATV experience for the public, as planning would be implemented to move some routes to more sustainable locations according to trail specifications, thus enhancing safety, the recreation opportunity, and protection of resources. Those with families wishing to stay off designated roads that are open to passenger vehicles would appreciate these opportunities. **Alternative 3** would adopt the routes onto the designated trail system. The priority for trail reconstruction and relocation will be based on public safety, resource damage, and type of use.

Under **Alternative 3**, 14 miles of unauthorized routes would be proposed to be designated seasonally for use by motorcycles, and 1 mile would be designated for yearlong use. Motorcyclists would still be able to use other motorized routes on the Forest, but these routes do not provide a similar experience since they are ATV width to road-width routes rather than single track trails. Designating some of the two track motorized trails as nonmotorized would impact those expert riders that were able to maneuver the steep narrow trails. The closure of some motorized routes would concentrate use onto smaller areas depending upon the type and amount of use a route receives. Differing levels of motorized route designation would displace users and affect visitor satisfaction. Some visitors may feel offended or defensive if the activity they prefer to participate in is deemed as inappropriate by others or if their experience is disrupted or perceived as undesirable.

Additionally, once unauthorized routes are designated, the Forest Service would be able to expend funds for maintenance and improvement, which are intended to ensure the integrity of travel routes.

The opportunity to use some of these trails is changed to nonmotorized use, but the use of the trail is not lost. Visitors could still hike or horseback ride on these trails.

For a listing of the unauthorized routes proposed to be designated on the MVUM in **Alternative 3**, please refer to Appendix K to the FEIS.

Motorized Vehicle Use for Dispersed Camping

Under **Alternative 3**, motorized wheeled vehicle use for dispersed camping would be limited to 300 feet from the centerline on either side of a designated motorized route. Visitors are encouraged to adhere to the conditions of use to reduce resource damage listed on page 8 of this document.

In addition, corridors for motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping would be extended to 20 campsites that are greater than 300 feet from a designated road or trail, as identified on the maps of the alternative. The dispersed campsites are listed below in Table 3.2-17, and include areas such as the Hughes Creek, Tin Cup, Watchtower, Balsam Creek, and Lost Horse Creek. Motorized vehicle access to these sites would be permitted, as there are no resource concerns, and they have been used by visitors in the past. Access to these sites should be provided so visitors can continue to use and enjoy these dispersed areas. Motorized vehicle use routes leading to dispersed campsites would be monitored for route proliferation and resource impacts.

Table 3.2- 17: Dispersed Camping Areas Greater than 300 Feet from a Designated Route

Number on Alternative Map	Name
1	Balsam Creek
2	Balsam Creek
3	Black's Crossing
4	Hughes Creek
5	Hughes Creek
6	Lost Horse - Road #429
7	Lost Horse - Road #429
8	Near Junction with Road #75 and Skalkaho Highway
9	Road #273
10	Road #273
11	Road #273
12	Road #273
13	Road #639
14	Overwhich
15	Salt Creek
16	Salt Creek
17	Tin Cup
18	Upper West Fork
19	Watchtower
20	Watchtower

Some routes that would be closed to motorized vehicle use for dispersed camping under this alternative are in the Tin Cup area. This area has multiple unauthorized routes that are greater than 300 feet from a designated road. These motorized vehicle routes would be rehabilitated and closed to motorized vehicle use for dispersed camping. There would be a separate NEPA document for this activity due to ground disturbing activities.

Several factors suggest a range of minor-to-moderate future increases in motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping. Most sites that have desirable campsite characteristics have already been established by repeated use, limiting future increases in the number of motorized routes to access them. Expansion of new and existing sites is expected, but would likely be limited by terrain features including standing and down trees, large rocks, thick vegetation, water features, narrow stream canyons, and abrupt topographic changes. Existing dispersed sites typically have a suitable motorized access route commonly used to get to the site.

The Magruder Corridor and some sites in the Lost Horse Corridor are areas where parking at dispersed campsites occurs within 30 feet of water, which would be prohibited under **Alternative 3**. However, effects due to motorized vehicle access to these sites can be, and have been, mitigated by placing large boulders to prevent vehicles from parking too close to water, and using gravel to harden areas to prevent surface erosion; in some cases, access routes and parking areas have been moved or closed. Closing access to these sites would require separate NEPA as ground disturbance would most likely occur.

The Forest will continue to monitor the emergence of new dispersed camping sites that are accessed by motorized vehicles, as well as changes at existing sites. Sites where motorized access routes result in excessive effects will be altered or closed. The total number of sites used for dispersed camping, and

associated motorized routes, is expected to increase gradually over time. Firewood cutting following beetle or fire events is expected to open up more access routes to dispersed camp sites.

Those who are dispersed camping may experience dust or noise from use on the designated route. Damage to natural resources should decrease due to conditions of use and parking 30 feet from a stream.

For **Alternative 3,** motorized vehicle use to dispersed camping would be allowed in RWAs across the Forest. However, motorized access for dispersed camping would not be allowed in the Lolo Creek IRA, as there are no motorized routes available in this area.

Motorized/Mechanical Transport Use Opportunities

A variety of roads and trails make up the proposed routes to be designated for motorized use for **Alternative 3.** Effects to motorized users under this alternative would be an increase of designated routes, which would lead to an increase in noise levels depending upon the use the area received. Users desiring off-road (trail) opportunities would experience changes with the closure of unauthorized routes and routes closed for resource reasons. Motorized users who yearn for challenging experiences may find a road-based system does not meet their desires. Increased use of these designated areas may result in higher maintenance needs and eventually lead to closure if resource damage becomes too great.

The designation of motorized opportunities, particularly by vehicle class, may affect nonmotorized opportunities. Recreational experiences between the motorized users could be impacted when travel routes are shared with nonmotorized use. Some roads would be restricted to vehicles 50 inches or less in width to provide the desired trail experience. Often times, these roads have native surfaces or have brushed and grassed in, and can provide a narrower trail experience that some visitors prefer. Over time, these routes would narrow additionally as vegetation naturally encroaches on the road.

Although there would be plentiful opportunities for motorized recreation for vehicles 50 inches or less in width as a result of restricting motorized access on some National Forest System roads under this alternative, conflicts of use could continue to occur on all designated routes.

Implementation of **Alternative 3** would provide a mix of opportunities for motorized recreation, and would be attractive to users that are seeking a roaded-natural setting and experience given the number of motorized roads and trails available.

In keeping with the theme of **Alternative 3,** most of Trail #313 is proposed to be available for motorized use, with the following exceptions:

- Between its intersection with Trail #308 to rerouted Trail #329 (TR-SCOP-30), a distance of .9 miles;
- The section of Trail #313 that is within the Lolo National Forest's closure to all motorized use (approximately 10 miles between the Bitterroot National Forest's Grizzly Creek on the north and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Trail #8008 on the south;
- The 1 mile closure to all motorized use to protect sensitive cultural resources; and
- The section that is within the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness.

In **Alternative 3**, approximately 62.6 total miles of Trail #313 are proposed to be open as either single-track or double-track trail use. Two small sections of the trail would need to be relocated outside of the Welcome Creek Wilderness in order to make them legal for motorized use; this will require a separate NEPA analysis and decision.

In response to the many comments received on the DEIS, the requirement that "No motorized vehicles or mechanical transport [will be] allowed in Designated Wilderness and Recommended Wilderness" has been changed for **Alternative 3.** This alternative positively affects motorized users by increasing the trail miles in RWAs available to motorcycles to 63.6 miles in **Alternative 3** compared to 39.7 miles in **Alternative 2.** Miles of trail open to mechanized transport would remain the same as in **Alternative 2** at 67.8 miles. Thus

in **Alternative 3**, motorized vehicles and mechanical transport will be permitted on some trails in recommended wilderness.

Alternative 3, to a greater degree than **Alternative 2**, does not acknowledge there are other social effects to Wilderness attributes associated with these types of uses. Please refer to Chapter 3.3 for further discussion.

Forest wide, 1,282 miles of trail would be open to mechanical transport use in **Alternative 3**, a 66 mile increase when compared to **Alternative 2.** See Table 3.2-15, Bicycles – Where Permitted and Miles of Trail Available, by Alternative.

In response to comments on the DEIS pertaining to trails proposed for closure because they lead to Designated Wilderness, 21 miles of the 24 that were closed in the DEIS would remain open to single track vehicles in **Alternative 3.**

As a result of comments on the DEIS, **Alternative 3** of the FEIS, Trail #313.1, (mile post 0.00 – 4.07, milepost 19.10-22.07, and milepost 31.90-37.95) are being proposed to be opened to single-track motorized travel. The section from mile post 22.07 to 31.90 is closed by special order on the Lolo National Forest.

Based on DEIS comments for Trail #313.2, (mile post 0.00-22.82) is being proposed in the FEIS to be opened to single trail motorized travel in **Alternative 3**.

In **Alternative 3,** approximately 25.3 miles of the Continental Divide Trail Scenic Trail (#9) are proposed to remain open to single-track motorized use yearlong. This is the section from the trail's intersection with Montana Highway 43 (near Lost Trail Pass) to the point that it enters the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness.

A number of comments were received on the DEIS regarding Trail #39 (Chain of Lakes). While many commenters acknowledged the resource concerns associated with motorized use, some questioned whether the trail could be repaired or rerouted, rather than closed.

According to the 2000 trail condition survey, (West Fork District Trail #39 folder), there are at least six identified sections on the trail that have unsustainable grades of 25-30 percent. These are contributing to adverse resource effects, as well as causing concern for public health and safety.

The IDT's trail specialist looked at two options under **Alternative 3** that would result in a trail with a more sustainable grade, eliminating the erosion and widening issues of the trail that are occurring now.

The first considered rerouting each of the six sections. This is described as a "Band-Aid" approach: rerouted sections are typically constructed parallel to the existing trail. If they are not built well, and if the existing trail is not properly obliterated, the original route gets reestablished, and use on it continues. Or, two trails become available, which creates twice the resource concerns. This option would not solve the resource problems as it would locate the trail on a similar unacceptable grade, and could lead to additional damage.

The second option considered a reroute starting at approximately mile post 2.3 and ending at Trail #313. This would require constructing approximately 7.3 miles of new double-track trail, away from the existing trail, with a sustaining grade from 0-10 percent. The existing trail between mile posts 4.26 and 4.75 could still be used.

This reroute would result in a trail approximately 10 miles in length, with approximately 6.8 miles located within the Sapphire WSA. Currently, approximately 3.3 miles of the trail are located with the WSA. The estimated cost for this reroute is approximately $134,115.

While the second option would be feasible on-the-ground, there are other considerations. Cost of construction would be a factor as the Forest's budget for trail operation, maintenance, and improvement continues to decrease; however, there could be opportunities utilizing partnerships and external grants. The more important factor would be the effect on wilderness attributes associated with new trail construction in a WSA. As stated in the Montana Wilderness Study Act, "Sec. 3. (a) Except as otherwise provided by this

section, and subject to existing private rights, the wilderness study areas designated by this Act shall, until Congress determines otherwise, be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture so as to maintain their **presently existing Wilderness character** (emphasis added) and potential for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System {Project File folder 'usfs_direction_and policies_laws,' Project File document DIRECTION-004.pdf}.

Under **Alternative 3**, Trail #39, a very popular trail, would remain open to ATVs and motorcycles resulting in continued erosion of fines and exposing more rock and widening of the trail tread. This would not move the area towards one of the Recreation standards for MA 5, stated on III-37 (6) "*Pending resolution by Congress, that portion of the management area within the boundary of Montana Study Act areas will be administered according to the goals and standards established for Management Area 6"* (USDA Forest Service 1987a). The goal for MA 6 is "*Pending action by Congress, manage to maintain the presently existing wilderness characteristics and potential for inclusion in the wilderness system*." Refer to Chapter 3, Wilderness, Section 3.3.4, Environmental Consequences -Sapphire Wilderness Study Area Assessment, for additional discussion of Trail #39 (Chain of Lakes).

Nonmotorized Opportunities

The designation of motorized opportunities, particularly the designation by vehicle class, may affect nonmotorized opportunities.

Due to the acres of nonmotorized areas, such as Designated Wilderness, it is expected that those desiring a nonmotorized experience would be able to meet their expectations. However, the designation of motorized routes may impact the nonmotorized experience by increasing noise, dust, and the feeling that more people are in the area.

Under **Alternative 3, the** miles of trails available for nonmotorized use would decrease from the existing condition of 143 miles to 40 miles. This reflects a decrease of 103 miles (72 percent) compared to **Alternative 2**. Miles of roads available for nonmotorized use would increase from the current condition of 422 miles to 443 miles. This reflects an increase of 21 miles (5 percent) of nonmotorized road use miles compared to **Alternative 2.** The miles of open road in selected IRAs remain the same as compared to **Alternative 2** but the miles of open trail increase from 312 to 361 miles. This is an increase of 49 miles when compared **to Alternative 2**. Closing of some motorized trails within selected inventoried roadless areas (IRA) is proposed to provide large blocks of quiet areas, and to protect those attributes that have been identified by the nonmotorized user as opportunities to provide for solitude, tranquility, and a more primitive recreation experience, as well as benefits to wildlife, which would include lack of disturbance and increased security. Providing a quiet, nonmotorized opportunity requires a block of land large enough to buffer noise from adjacent lands that may be providing motorized recreation opportunities. Large blocks of quiet areas enhance the recreation experience for many users such as hunters, fisherman, hikers, and horseback riders. These areas allow the user to experience solitude and quiet in a more remote recreation setting. See Table 3.2-16 Miles of Open Road and Motorized Trails, Within IRAs by Alternative.

The nonmotorized opportunities on Trail #313 in **Alternative 3** are limited to the four exceptions noted in the Motorized/Mechanical Transport Use Opportunities section above, which involve approximately 11.9 miles outside of the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness, and approximately 9.5 miles within the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness.

In **Alternative 3**, exclusive nonmotorized trail use of Trail #9 (CDNST) is limited to the portion of the trail that is adjacent to or within the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness (approximately 15 miles).

ROS

Although there may be changes in the mileage available in the various MAs, the ROS designations would not change.

Budget and Affordability

The estimated cost to maintain the miles of motorized trails under **Alternative 3** is $493,500, an increase of $9,250 (2 percent) compared to **Alternative 2** (Table 3.2-12). This cost would be sufficiently covered by the historical level of funding ranging from $456,607 to $965,051 available for the National Forest System trails on the Bitterroot National Forest for the years from 2007–2013, with the exception for 2007, with a minimum of $456,607, a shortfall of $36,893, as shown in Table 3.2-6. This estimate assumes that all trails would be maintained annually and funding would remain static, but, as mentioned previously, trail work is reviewed annually and prioritized by various factors such as wildfires, wind events, health, and safety issues. It is unlikely that the Forest would be able to accomplish all the work in one year as other priorities would backlog the work into future years, and the Forest's budget for trails is predicted to decrease in the upcoming years.

The 10 miles of proposed trails include connectors and new tread that would require separate NEPA analysis and further survey work so costs are estimated at $170,000, and would be dependent on funding and other forest trail priorities at the time. These additional 10 miles of motorized trails would provide new opportunities. The 10 miles of proposed trails will become designated trails after site-specific evaluation. The overall network of routes designated for motor vehicle use would then expand. These designated routes will form a more stable base for long-term management and will receive maintenance through agency resources and cooperative relationships, thereby expanding opportunities for motor vehicle users.

Unauthorized routes that are not designated will be closed to motor vehicle use, which would limit opportunities for motor vehicle users but might expand opportunities for other recreational visitors seeking a nonmotorized experience.

Alternative 3: Over-Snow

Alternative 3 would provide opportunities for both motorized and nonmotorized users, with more emphasis placed on motorized use: the acres available for over-snow vehicle use would increase slightly by approximately 4,679 acres (0.6 percent) from the existing condition of 748,891 acres to 753,660 acres.

Alternative 3 allows for over-snow vehicle use in portions of the Blue Joint and Selway-Bitterroot RWAs on the Forest, as shown on the **Alternative 3** Over-Snow Vehicle Use map. Some recommended wilderness acres are currently closed with a special closure order, and are not available for over-snow use. The RWA portion of the Blue Joint WSA would be open to over-snow vehicle use, as well as the RWAs adjacent to the Bitterroot portion of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

The motorized over-snow experience on the Forest would continue to deliver opportunities for unrestricted off-route over-snow vehicle use and play areas, such as high elevation slopes and bowls, providing remote destinations for over-snow vehicle users to enjoy. **Alternative 3** would be attractive to over-snow vehicle users. However, over-snow vehicle use leaves little accessible untracked powder for nonmotorized over-snow users; conflicts of use and safety issues between motorized and nonmotorized over-snow users would continue and possibly escalate. Noise impacts caused by over-snow vehicles use would continue.

Nonmotorized users can utilize the entire Forest for over-snow recreation; however, approximately 841,484 acres on the Forest would be available exclusively for nonmotorized over-snow opportunities. Finding quiet, untracked areas to recreate in could be more difficult for nonmotorized users with this alternative.

Alternative 4: Summer

Refer to Table 3.2-10 for a comparison of the indicators for the Recreation and Trails resource by alternative for summer. Also, please refer to Appendices G, H, and I to the FEIS: Appendix G shows the routes screened for the DEIS; Appendix H shows the changes to routes between the DEIS and the FEIS; and Appendix I shows the proposed designations for all routes, including those which were not screened.

Alternative 4 would designate 1,223 miles of routes for use by motorized vehicles. This would represent a decrease of 1,378 miles (53 percent) compared to **Alternative 2**. Those unauthorized routes that are not designated as open would now be closed. The motorized routes would include 585 miles of road open yearlong and 496 miles of roads open seasonally to motorized travel. This is a reduction of about 312 miles of road open yearlong and 140 miles of road open seasonally from **Alternative 2.** A 0.4 mile connector is being proposed between Roads #62484 and #62487 for highway legal vehicles yearlong.

There would be approximately 10 miles of trails open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width yearlong, and 116 miles of trails open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width seasonally. This is a reduction of 100 miles for trails 50 inches or less in width open yearlong and a reduction of 434 miles for trails 50 inches or less in width open seasonally compared to **Alternative 2.**

Motorcycle users would have about 6 miles of trail open yearlong and those open seasonally would be 10 miles. Trails open to motorcycles yearlong would decrease by 324 miles and by 68 miles seasonally compared to **Alternative 2**. Motorcyclists would still be able to use other motorized routes on the Forest, but these routes do not provide a similar experience since they are ATV width to road-width routes rather than single track trails. Designating some of the two-track motorized trails as nonmotorized would impact those expert riders that were able to maneuver the steep narrow trails. The closure of some motorized routes would concentrate use onto smaller areas depending upon the type and amount of use a route receives. Differing levels of motorized route designation would displace visitors and affect visitor satisfaction. Some visitors may feel offended or defensive if the activity they prefer to participate in is deemed as inappropriate by others or if their experience is disrupted or perceived as undesirable.

Alternative 4 proposes to designate 3 miles of unauthorized routes on the MVUM. About 2 miles would be proposed to be designated as ATV trails seasonally; approximately 1 mile would be designated to be open yearlong. Several of the routes would connect existing roads and trails. No unauthorized trails for motorcycles would be proposed for designation in **Alternative 4**. All of the routes would be shown on the MVUM as no separate site-specific NEPA analysis would be required.

Designating these unauthorized routes as trails would provide an enhanced ATV experience for the public as planning would be implemented to move the routes to more sustainable locations according to trail specifications, thus enhancing safety, the recreation opportunity, and protection of resources. Those with families wishing to stay off designated roads that are open to passenger vehicles would appreciate these opportunities.

Additionally, once unauthorized routes are designated, the Forest Service would be able to expend funds for maintenance and improvement, which are intended to ensure the integrity of travel routes. Consequently, conditions on the routes would improve, as ruts would be bladed, and they would be cleared of obstructions, resulting in safer conditions for users.

The opportunity to use a number of the routes not designated as motorized would not be lost, as they would change to nonmotorized use. Nonmotorized visitors could hike, ride bicycles, or horseback ride on these trails as well as all nonmotorized areas on the forest.

For a listing of the unauthorized routes proposed to be designated on the MVUM in **Alternative 4**, please refer to Appendix K to the FEIS.

Motorized Wheeled Vehicle Use for Dispersed Camping

Under **Alternative 4**, motorized wheeled motorized access for dispersed camping would be limited to 150 feet from centerline on either side of a designated motorized route. Visitors are encouraged to adhere to the conditions of use to reduce resource damage listed on page 8 of this document. This compares to 300 feet for **Alternative 2**.

In addition, corridors for motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping would be extended to 27 dispersed campsites that are greater than 150 feet from a designated road or trail, as identified on the maps

of the alternative. These 27 dispersed campsites are listed below in Table 3.2-18, and include areas such as Blacks Crossing, East Fork Road, Salt Creek Upper West Fork, and Lost Horse Climbing area. Motorized vehicle access to these sites would be permitted, as there are no resource concerns, and they have been used by visitors in the past. Access to these sites should be provided so visitors can continue to use and enjoy these dispersed areas.

Table 3.2- 18: Dispersed Camping Areas Greater than 150 Feet from a Designated Route

Number on Alternative Map	Name
3	Black's Crossing
4	Hughes Creek
5	Hughes Creek
6	Lost Horse – Road #429
7	Lost Horse - Road #429
8	Near Junction with Road #75 and Skalkaho Highway
9	Road #273
10	Road #273
11	Road #273
12	Road #273
14	Overwhich
15	Salt Creek
16	Salt Creek
17	Tin Cup
18	Upper West Fork
19	Watchtower
20	Watchtower
22	Lost Horse – Road #429
23	Salt Creek
24	Tin Cup
34	Junction of Roads #715 and #5607
35	Junction of Roads #715 and #1126
36	Road #711 and Skalkaho Highway
39	East Fork Road, North of Jennings Camp
40	East Fork Road and Road #725
41	East Fork Road and Road #725
42	Lost Horse Climbing Area

Motorized wheeled access would not be permitted for dispersed camping at the Balsam Creek sites, Road #639, Tin Cup, three sites near Blue Joint, five sites near Trapper Creek, and two sites off Road #321 because the roads or trails which provide access to these sites are proposed to be closed to motorized use due to resource concerns.

Alternative 4 would reduce the opportunity for motorized wheeled access to dispersed campsites by approximately 16 percent, compared to **Alternative 2**, as most dispersed sites are located within 150 feet of designated routes (1999 Forest sampling of dispersed sites) {Project File document REC-055.pdf}. Motorized wheeled cross-country routes leading between dispersed campsites would be prohibited. The action to limit the travel distance to 150 feet for motorized vehicle use off designated routes to access

dispersed camping sites, with the exception for the identified 27 sites, would result in excluding access to numerous historic dispersed camping locations. This change in designation would affect the dispersed camping experience by reducing the number of routes and sites available, concentrate uses into smaller areas, and possibly increase resource impacts because available routes and sites would be more heavily used rather than the use spread out.

Routes that would be closed to motorized access for dispersed camping under this alternative would be in the Tin Cup area. This area has multiple unauthorized routes that are greater than 150 feet from a designated road which would be rehabilitated and closed to motorized access for dispersed camping. There would be a separate NEPA document for this activity due to ground disturbing activities.

Several factors suggest a range of minor-to-moderate future increases in motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping. Most sites that have desirable campsite characteristics have already been established by repeated use, limiting future increases in the number of motorized routes to access them. Expansion of new and existing sites is expected, but would likely be limited by terrain features including standing and down trees, large rocks, thick vegetation, water features, narrow stream canyons, and abrupt topographic changes. Existing dispersed sites typically have a suitable motorized access route commonly used to get to the site.

The Magruder Corridor and some sites in the Lost Horse Corridor are areas where parking at dispersed campsites occurs within 30 feet of water, which would be prohibited under **Alternative 4**. However, effects due to motorized vehicle access to these sites can be, and have been, mitigated by placing large boulders to prevent vehicles from parking too close to water, and using gravel to harden areas to prevent surface erosion; in some cases, access routes and parking areas have been moved or closed. Closing access to these sites would require separate NEPA as ground disturbance would most likely occur.

The Forest will continue to monitor the emergence of new dispersed camping sites that are accessed by motorized vehicles, as well as changes at existing sites. Sites where motorized access routes result in excessive effects will be altered or closed. The total number of sites used for dispersed camping, and associated motorized routes, is expected to increase gradually over time. Firewood cutting following beetle or fire events is expected to open up more access routes to dispersed camp sites.

Those who are dispersed camping may experience dust or noise from use on the designated route. Damage to natural resources should decrease on those routes and sites no longer available for use and parking 30 feet from a stream.

There would be no motorized vehicle use to dispersed camping in RWAs or either of the WSAs in **Alternative 4** on the Forest. In addition, in the Lolo, Swift Creek, Needle Creek, North Big Hole, and Tolan Creek IRAs, there would also be no motorized dispersed camping opportunities because there are no motorized routes available in these areas.

Motorized/Mechanical Transport Use Opportunities

A variety of roads and trails make up the designation of proposed routes for motorized use for **Alternative 4.**

Users desiring off-road (trail) opportunities would experience changes with the closure of unauthorized routes and routes closed for resource reasons. Motorized users who yearn for challenging experiences may find a road-based system does not meet their desires. Increased use of these designated routes may result in higher maintenance needs and eventually lead to closure if resource damage becomes too great. Some roads would be restricted to vehicles 50 inches or less in width to provide the desired trail experience. Often times, these roads have native surfaces or have grassed in and can provide a narrower trail experience that some visitors prefer. Over time, these routes would narrow additionally as vegetation naturally encroaches on the road.

Alternative 4 would provide a mix of opportunities for motorized recreation on the Forest, but would most negatively affect those motorized opportunities for vehicles 50 inches or less and for motorcycles yearlong

and seasonally when compared to **Alternative 2.** As a result of restricting motorized access on some National Forest System roads and trails under this alternative, conflict of use could continue to occur on all designated routes. In addition, increased noise levels and user displacement would result in user dissatisfaction. Those routes closed to motorized vehicles would be available to the nonmotorized user providing areas free from noise, dust and pollution.

Alternative 4 would negatively affect motorized/mechanical transport use by decreasing the miles of trails available to motorcycles and bicycle riders where those trails occur in RWAs which would result in user dissatisfaction and user displacement. There would be a reduction of 39.7 miles of motorized trails and 67.8 miles of mechanized transport when compared to **Alternative 2**. While motorized/mechanical transport use may not always have physical impacts on the landscape, prohibiting mechanized transport and motorized vehicles, from RWAs acknowledges there are other, social effects to Wilderness attributes associated with these types of uses. Please refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3, Recommended Wilderness, for further discussion.

The total miles of trail available for mechanical transport use, forest wide, decreases by 160 miles to 1,056 in Alternative **4** compared to **Alternative 2.** See Table 3.2-15 , Bicycles – Where Permitted and Miles of Trail Available, by Alternative.

The opportunities for motorized use are minimal under **Alternative 4**: only 2.7 miles of Trail #313 are proposed to be open to double-track motorized use. This section of the trail is located on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, from Road #80 to about 1 mile south of the trail's intersection with Road #8107. In this area, the trail sometimes is coincident with the roads, and the roads remain open to motorized access for mining claims.

Trail #313 would be closed to all motorized for most of its entire length, with the exception of the section of the trail from mile post 0.00 -2.70 of trail segment #313.6, which is proposed to be open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width yearlong.

In **Alternative 4** the entire CDNST Trail #9 managed by the Bitterroot National Forest, approximately 25.3 miles, would be available exclusively for nonmotorized use.

Nonmotorized Opportunities

The quality of the experience for those seeking nonmotorized recreational activities would have the greatest potential to be enhanced under **Alternative 4.** Due to the amount of nonmotorized areas proposed, coupled with the Designated Wilderness, RWAs, and WSAs on the Forest, it is expected that those desiring a nonmotorized experience would be able to meet their expectations.

The miles of trails available for nonmotorized use would increase from the existing condition of 143 miles to 570 miles under **Alternative 4**. This reflects an increase of 427 miles (225 percent) compared to **Alternative 2**. Road miles available for nonmotorized use would increase from the current condition of 422 miles to 1373 miles. This reflects an increase of 951 miles (225 percent) compared to **Alternative 2**. The miles of open road in selected IRAs decrease from 9 to 4 miles when compared to **Alternative 2** with the biggest decrease in motorized trails from 312 to 2 miles, a decrease of 310 miles when compared to **Alternative 2**. Closing some motorized trails within selected IRAs would provide large blocks of quiet areas, and protect those attributes that have been identified by the nonmotorized user as opportunities to provide for solitude, tranquility, and a more primitive recreation experience. Providing a quiet, nonmotorized opportunity requires a block of land large enough to buffer noise from adjacent lands that may be providing motorized recreation opportunities. Large blocks of quiet areas enhance the recreation experience for many users such as hunters, fisherman, hikers, and horseback riders. These areas allow the user to experience solitude and quiet in a more remote recreation setting. Table 3.2-16.Summary of Miles of Open Road and Motorized Trails, Within IRAs by Alternative.

Hikers and stock users desiring nonmotorized cross-country travel to remote destinations, free from noise and vehicle pollution, would not encounter motorized vehicles unless those users were violating the designation.

Under **Alternative 4,** Trail #39 (Chain of Lakes) would be closed to all motorized use, moving the area towards one of the Recreation standards for MA 5, stated on III-37 (6) "*Pending resolution by Congress, that portion of the management area within the boundary of Montana Study Act areas will be administered according to the goals and standards established for Management Area 6"* (USDA Forest Service 1987a). The goal of MA 6 is *"Pending action by Congress, manage to maintain the presently existing wilderness characteristics and potential for inclusion in the wilderness system."* Refer to Section 3.3.4 Environmental Consequences, Sapphire Wilderness Study Area Assessment, for additional discussion of Trail #39 (Chain of Lakes).

There are a multitude of nonmotorized opportunities on Trail #313 in **Alternative 4**, since only about a total of 2.7 miles of the trail are proposed to be available for motorized use, leaving approximately 81.3 miles for nonmotorized enjoyment between Eightmile Saddle on the north and Trail 313's intersection with the Continental Divide Trail (#9) on the south.

In **Alternative 4,** the entire CDNST, Trail #9 is available exclusively for nonmotorized use.

Trails and Trailhead Access

Based on comments received on the DEIS, and internal Forest Service review, regarding the effects of motorized vehicles on water resources and fish and aquatic habitat, the ID Team's hydrologist and fisheries biologist compiled a list of additional roads and trails proposed to be closed to motorized use in **Alternative 4**.

The hydrologist recommended closures to motorized use to reduce sediment (based on the 2008 MTDEQ 303(d)-listed streams), and the fisheries biologist looked for routes with impacts on critical bull trout habitat; proposed closure of selected routes in **Alternative 4** would restrict access to major trailheads and trails. Please refer to Table 3.2-19 for a listing of these routes.

Table 3.2- 19: Trail Access that will change with Alternative 4

Trail Name	Trail Number	Road(s) Used for Access
Swift Creek	170	5764
Porcupine Saddle	196	729, 8112
East Fork	433	724
Moose Creek	168	432
Lick Creek	434	5770
Chain of Lakes	39	726
Weasel Creek	156	75
Willow Creek	300	364
Palisade Mountain	44	364,969, 1302, 1348
Flat Creek	148	364, 969, 1302, 1348
Gold Ridge	43	364, 969, 1302, 1348
Sawmill Saddle	313	710
Chaffin Creek	528	374, 716
Trapper Creek	598	374, 5628
Trapper Peak	133	5630, 5630A
Little Boulder	55	1130
Overwhich Creek	674	5703

Trail Name	Trail Number	Road(s) Used for Access
Little Blue Joint	223	362, 5656
Main Blue Joint	614	362
Reimel Tolan Divide	78	727
Meadow Bugle	171	725, 5762
Elk Ridge	172	725, 5761
Reimel Creek	175	727
Meadow Creek Ridge	462	725, 5762
Sign Creek	40	432
Railroad Creek	77	75, 711
Gleason Lake	299	364, 969
Shook Mountain - Medicine Point	601	731
Crandall Creek	184	5688, 5793
West Fork Divide (Salmon Challis NF)	106	5688
West Fork Divide (Salmon Challis NF)	106	5669
Razorback Mountain	106	5660, 5662
Nelson Lake	135	5633

Motorized access to the trails in Table 3.2-19 would change with **Alternative 4**. In addition, there are a number of trails accessed from National Forest System roads that currently do not have established trailheads. In all cases the trailhead or access point would need to be moved from the current location. Some trailhead parking areas would have to support multiple trails. For example; the trailhead at the head of the East Fork of the Bitterroot Drainage would have to support Trails #39, #40, #433, #168, #169, #198, #401, and #402. On the north end of the Skalkaho Road #75, the trailhead would have to support Trails #77, #154, #156, and #503. In the case of the Willow Creek Drainage, the Forest would have to work with private landowners to establish a trailhead for Trails #43, #44, #148, #299, #300, #311, and #321 because motorized access for the general public on Road #364 would be restricted within the private land area. In some areas, travel restrictions would require longer travel time to reach trailheads on the Forest.

The effect would be more people parking at a single trailhead and longer travel times for recreationalists to their planned destinations. Loss of access to popular trailheads and trails would result in visitor displacement and dissatisfaction.

Loop Opportunities

The following table identifies a list of roads proposed for yearlong closure in **Alternative 4** that would eliminate loop opportunities for recreational driving, reduce access for hunting and fuel wood gathering, and increase travel times and distances for some forest users. Loss of loop opportunities could concentrate uses in other areas and displace some users, resulting in user dissatisfaction.

Table 3.2- 20: Loss of Loop Opportunities

Road Name	Road Number	Loop Roads
Skalkaho Rye	75	711, 715, 720, 5706, 13235
Guide Rye	311	717, 723, 5778
North Fork Rye Creek	321	273, 1126, 715, 13235
Blue Joint	362	5656, 5658, 5660, 5644, 5644M, 732, 732A
Ambrose Creek	428	312, 710, 2129(Lolo NF), 4267(Lolo NF)
Robbins Gulch	446	75, 5612
Sawmill	710	2129(Lolo NF), 4267(Lolo NF)

Road Name	Road Number	Loop Roads
Railroad Creek	711	75
Jennings Camp Creek	723	311, 717, 5686, 5778
Meadow Creek	725	725B, 5753, 5764, 5765, 1137 (B-D NF)
West Fork Camp Creek	729	73468
One Creek – Two Creek	732	5644, 5644M, 732A
Trapper Chaffin	734	This is a loop road, 374A, 5711
Bare Cone	1303	5644, 5644M, 732, 732A
Coal Creek	5660	362, 5656, 5658
Woods Creek	5669	44 (Salmon Challis NF), 91

Drainages with No Motorized Access

Under **Alternative 4**, the drainages listed in Table 3.2-21 would no longer have roaded access. Most of these roads do not provide loop opportunities, with the exception for Road #5669 (Woods Creek). Implementing the proposed restrictions would reduce access for fuel wood gathering, hunting, and recreational driving. In some cases, the restriction would eliminate access to large areas of the Forest. For example, restricting motorized access on Road #364 would eliminate motorized access from Road #312 (Burnt Fork) to Road #714 (Gird Creek), which would remain open in Alternative 4. Eliminating motorized access to these drainages could result in concentrations of uses elsewhere, visitor dissatisfaction, and displacement.

Table 3.2- 21: Drainages with No Motorized Access

Drainage Name	Main Access Roads
Willow Creek	#364
St. Clair Creek	#364
Ambrose Creek	#428
Sawmill Creek	#710
Spoon Creek	#716
Reimel Creek	#727
McCoy Creek	#734
Gold Creek	#969
Boulder Creek	#1130
Weasel Creek	#1135
Flat Creek/Sign Creek	#1348
Lavene Creek	#5630
Troy Creek	#5630A
Gemmel Creek	#5633
Flat Creek	#5637
Mine Creek	#5688
Woods Creek	#5669
West Fork Camp Creek	#8112

ROS

Although there may be changes in the mileage available in the various MAs, the ROS designations would not change. Forest Plan Objectives show an increase in SPNM resulting in a decrease in SPM.

Budget and Affordability

The estimated cost to maintain the miles of motorized trails for **Alternative 4** is $69,950. This would represent a decrease of $414,300 (86 percent) compared to **Alternative 2** (Table 3.2-12). This cost would be sufficiently covered by the historical level of funding ranging from $456,607 to $965,051 available for the National Forest System trails on the Bitterroot National Forest for the years from 2007–2013, as shown in Table 3.2-6. This estimate assumes that all trails would be maintained annually and budgets remain static, but as mentioned previously, trail work is reviewed annually and prioritized by various factors such as wildfires, wind events, health, and safety issues. It is unlikely that the Forest would be able to accomplish all the work in one year as other priorities would backlog the work into future years, and the Forest's budget for trails is predicted to decrease in the upcoming years.

There would be no new proposed trails or connectors thus reducing new opportunities for additional motorized trail experiences.

Alternative 4: Over-Snow

Alternative 4 responds to the issue raised by nonmotorized users relating to a need for more nonmotorized opportunities, particularly in winter, by providing approximately 1,234,706 acres on the Forest exclusively for nonmotorized over-snow opportunities. Many nonmotorized over-snow users do not want to share the same settings with over-snow vehicle users because of associated exhaust smells, noise, loss of solitude, and safety concerns with fast-moving vehicles. All are seeking settings that meet their specific recreation interests and needs.

Under **Alternative 4,** the acres available for over-snow vehicle use would decrease from the existing condition of 748,981 acres to 360,438 acres, a reduction of 388,543 acres (52 percent) compared to **Alternative 2**. **Alternative 4** would exclude 102,386 acres in the Allen Mountain IRA from over-snow vehicle use to address winter wildlife issues concerning the wolverine. Other IRA closures in this alternative would be Sleeping Child, North Big Hole, Sapphire, Stony Mountain, and those adjacent to the Bitterroot portion of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. In addition, this alternative does not allow for over-snow vehicle use in RWAs and WSAs on the Forest as would be shown on the **Alternative 4** OSVUM. Some recommended wilderness acres are currently closed in **Alternative 2** with a special closure order, and are not available for over-snow travel.

Because some favorite motorized areas would be reduced, motorized users may choose to use other areas on the Forest, other National Forests, or state and private land. Although there would be opportunities for motorized over-snow activities, users may have a difficult time finding areas that meet their needs and desires off the groomed system. Furthermore, the loss of areas for over-snow vehicle use will concentrate users into smaller areas, potentially resulting in crowding and visitor displacement. Although they would be less than the other action alternatives, noise impacts caused by over-snow vehicle use would continue.

Due to increased populations coming into the Bitterroot National Forest and the Bitterroot Valley to ride, and by reducing motorized routes, the potential for motorized intrusions into Designated Wilderness could increase throughout the nonmotorized over-snow areas within this alternative. This could increase the need for additional law enforcement patrols in these areas.

Summary of Effects – Summer

In **Alternatives 1, 3, and 4**, all designated motorized trails would be identified for use either by ATVs (single track vehicles would also be allowed) or single track vehicles (ATVs would not be allowed). By designating proposed trails for ATVs, planning would be implemented to locate these to a more sustainable route according to trail specifications thus enhancing safety, the recreation opportunity, and protection of resources. Better control of ATV travel is expected, reducing potential resource impacts and conflicts of use. Clearer understanding by the public would result in better user compliance on National Forest System lands

With respect to the overall change in the designation of motorized routes, **Alternative 4** would show the largest decrease (1,378 miles), followed by **Alternative 1** (308 miles). **Alternative 3** would show an increase of 82 miles, while **Alternative 2** would show no change.

A reduction in the miles of routes available for motorized use has the potential to increase conflict of uses between motorized and nonmotorized uses, to concentrate users, and to displace some users, depending upon the use the area receives, which may impact some visitors' recreation experiences. By concentrating motorized activities in smaller areas, such as in the Rye Creek area, it is reasonable to expect that the noise levels would increase in those areas, and decrease elsewhere. Individuals that are displaced may have a strong personal connection to these areas, and are likely to feel adversely impacted.

Users desiring off-road opportunities would experience changes with the closure of unauthorized routes and routes closed for resource reasons.

On the other hand, decreasing the miles of routes designated for motorized use increases the miles available for nonmotorized uses, providing for additional quiet areas. Fewer road miles and larger nonmotorized areas would provide a greater potential to meet the experiences sought by nonmotorized users.

Nonmotorized users would be able to hike, horseback ride, and bicycle on motorized routes, and could expect encounters with motorized vehicles. Providing a quiet, nonmotorized opportunity requires a sufficient block of land to buffer noise from adjacent lands that may be providing motorized recreation opportunities. Large quiet areas enhance the recreation experience for many user groups such as hunters, fisherman, hikers, stock users, and mountain bikers. These areas allow the user to experience solitude and quiet in a more remote recreation setting. Many nonmotorized recreation users feel that their expectations for a quiet recreation experience cannot be met in areas where motorized recreation occurs.

Unauthorized routes to be designated on the MVUM would total 33 miles under **Alternative 3**, 30 miles under **Alternative 1**, and 3 miles under **Alternative 4.** This would create new opportunities for motorized users, enhancing their recreational experience. Some of the routes proposed to be designated would not be shown on the MVUM until separate site-specific NEPA analysis and decisions are completed and the routes exist on the ground. Increasing the miles of routes for motorized use has the potential to result in additional conflict of uses between motorized and nonmotorized users, and increased noise, which has the potential to impact some visitors' recreation experiences. Unauthorized routes not designated on the MVUM would not be open to motorized vehicle use. Additionally, the Forest Service can expend funds for maintenance and improvements,

Under **Alternative 2**, no unauthorized routes would be designated on the MVUM. Routes created prior to the 2001 Tri-State Decision would continue to be available for use by motorized vehicles; routes created following the decision would not available for use. However, open routes would not be subject to maintenance and improvements as the Forest Service cannot expend funds on unauthorized routes. Consequently, the routes would continue to degrade; they would become more difficult to use, and safety concerns would increase. Aside from the safety concerns associated with poor trail conditions, some of the routes do not meet the needs of users. Some segments of single track and/or ATV trails are located on steep grades, in boggy areas, or do not provide a loop system for day rides. While these conditions may satisfy the more advanced riders, the less experienced riders find themselves on trails beyond their riding abilities.

Motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping would not change with **Alternatives 1, 2, and 3**. As permitted by the 2001 Tri-State Decision, motorized wheeled vehicles would be allowed to travel up to 300 feet off either side of a designated route for the purposes of accessing dispersed camping sites. Corridors would be extended to those sites identified on the maps of the alternatives. Under **Alternative 4**, the distance would be reduced to 150 feet. With **Alternatives 1, 2, and 3**, there would be little impact to those accessing dispersed campsites using motorized vehicles; under **Alternative 4**, some forest visitors may no longer be able to access dispersed camping sites using motorized vehicles; this may result in user dissatisfaction. However, those sites would continue to be accessed via nonmotorized means.

With respect to Trail #39 (Chain of Lakes), motorized use would not be permitted under **Alternatives 1 and 4**. All-terrain vehicles riders and motorcyclists would not have the opportunity to use this popular and scenic trail through high alpine meadows, subalpine larch stands, and rugged rocky terrain. Motorized use would be permitted to continue under **Alternatives 2 and 3.** This would result in the continued erosion of fines and the exposure of more rock and widening of the trail tread, and would not move the area into the desired condition as stated for MA 6.

With respect to Trail #313, under **Alternative 1,** motorized use would be prohibited where Trail #313 crosses into the Sapphire Wilderness Study Area, and the trail would be closed to motorized use in areas where the trail bisects large unroaded areas that are best managed for nonmotorized recreation experiences. **Alternative 1** includes a new motorized route from Cinnebar Saddle north to the Cleveland Mountain area. This route would provide both motorized and nonmotorized users opportunities to use the trail, and would address concerns about motorized trespass off Trail #313 into the Welcome Creek Wilderness on the adjacent Lolo National Forest.

Under **Alternative 2,** Trail #313 would continue to be confusing to users not knowing what sections are open to motorized and nonmotorized use. Illegal ATV use in the Welcome Creek Wilderness would continue, with the potential to push further into the wilderness, thus affecting those visitors looking for a nonmotorized wilderness experience.

Under Alternative 3, approximately 63 miles of Trail #313 are proposed to be designated as either single-track or double-track trail. Two small sections of the trail would need to be relocated outside of the Welcome Creek Wilderness in order to make them legal for motorized use.

Most of Trail #313 is proposed to be available for motorized use with the following exceptions:

- Ø Between its intersection with Trail #308 to rerouted Trail #329 (named TR-SCOP-30), a distance of .9 miles;
- Ø The section of Trail #313 that is within the Lolo National Forest's closure to all motorized use (approximately 10 miles between the Bitterroot National Forest's Grizzly Creek on the north and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Trail #8008 on the south;
- Ø The 1 mile closure to all motorized use to protect sensitive cultural resources; and
- Ø The section that is within the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness.

Under **Alternative 4**, the opportunities for motorized use on Trail #313 would be minimal. The trail would be closed to all motorized use for most of its length; only 2.7 miles are proposed to be open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width.

With respect to the Continental Divide Scenic Trail (CDNST) (#9), under **Alternatives 1 and 4,** the trail would provide a nonmotorized trail system totaling 38.4 miles in length that would require minimal maintenance. **Alternative 3** proposes 25.3 miles open to single track vehicles. However, having a motorized section of trail between segments of nonmotorized trail on either end would complicate management, and be confusing to the public. Under **Alternative 2,** there would be no change in the management of the trail.

With respect to the Forest's ability to fund trail operations, maintenance, and improvements, **all alternatives** would be sufficiently covered by the historical level of funding, ranging from $456,607 to $965,051, available for the National Forest System trails on the Bitterroot National Forest for the years 2007–2013, with the exception of 2007. **Alternative 4** would be the least costly, followed by **Alternatives 1, 2, and 3.** Costs for **Alternatives 2 and 3** would have been $27,643 and $36,893 more than the minimum, respectively (Table 3.2-6) for 2007. By reducing the miles of routes designated for motorized use on the MVUM, inspections would become timelier, and maintenance would occur soon after an issue was identified, keeping any impacts to adjacent forest resources to a minimum.

With respect to the recreation opportunity spectrum, ROS would not change with **any alternative.** Although the miles available for each setting may differ, the ROS is not affected.

Summary of Effects – Over-Snow

Alternative 3 would result in an increase in the number of acres (4,679) available for over-snow vehicle use, while **Alternatives 1 and 4** would show decreases of 184,533 acres and 388,543 acres, respectively. **Alternative 2** would show no change. Under **Alternative 3**, conflicts of use and safety issues between motorized and nonmotorized over-snow users, as well as noise impacts, would continue and potentially escalate.

Under **Alternatives 1 and 4**, nonmotorized over-snow users would see an increase in large quiet areas, which would allow them to experience solitude and quiet in a more remote recreation setting. Many nonmotorized recreation users feel that their expectations for a quiet recreation experience cannot be met in areas where motorized recreation occurs. However, motorized users may feel displaced from their favorite riding areas as well as experiencing concentration of use.

Alternatives 1and 4 do not allow over-snow vehicle use in RWAs on the Forest, as shown on the maps of the alternatives. Currently, some RWAs are currently closed with a Special Closure Order, and are not available for over-snow travel. In addition, **Alternative 4** does not allow for over-snow vehicle use in either the Blue Joint or Sapphire WSAs.

In the case of over-snow vehicles, in accordance with 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart C, use would not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST (FSM 2353.42). In the case of bicycles, the CDNST 2009 Comprehensive plan 5b (2), clarifies that bicycle use may be allowed on the CDNST (16 U.S.C. 1246 (c) if the use is consistent with the applicable land and resource management plan.

F. Cumulative Effects

Geographic Boundaries

The defined cumulative effects analysis area for the Recreation and Trails resource is larger than the project area as it would include the Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Lolo, Salmon-Challis, and Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, which are adjacent to the Bitterroot National Forest, as well as state and private lands. Analysis of the National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) data for the period from October 2007 through September 2008 revealed that approximately 88.5 percent of visitors to the Bitterroot National Forest were local (reported to be living with 50 miles of the Forest boundary). The Forests listed above are within this distance from the Bitterroot National Forest, and users on those forests could recreate on this Forest. This analysis area is appropriate to analyze any incremental effects from the actions of this project in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable activities because the effects of implementing travel planning decisions on these forests could have potential cumulative effects on the Recreation and Trails resource on the Bitterroot National Forest, particularly on motorized recreation activities.

Activities within the Cumulative Effects Analysis Area

Past actions have contributed to the existing condition for the Recreation and Trails resource, which is described in Section 3.2.3 (Affected Environment).

Appendix A to the FEIS describes past, present, and reasonably foreseeable forest and other activities which, when combined with the activities proposed in the Travel Management Planning Project, could result in cumulative effects to the Recreation and Trails resource.

Summer

Some activities have no effect on the Recreation and Trails resource for the following reasons:

- Ø The activity's disturbance is too small and isolated to produce an effect
- Ø Project design features are applied to limit an activity's effects to a negligible level

- Ø The activities do not restrict access to National Forest System roads, trails, and areas
- Ø The activities do not result in conflicts of uses, concentration, or displacement of users

Examples of forest activities, which, when carried out consistent with existing regulations, produce no cumulative effects to the Recreation and Trails resource include:

- Ø Personal use firewood cutting;
- Ø Personal use Christmas Tree harvesting
- Ø Special uses\Permits
- Ø Public use
- Ø Invasive Plants management

There are forest activities that could result in cumulative effects to the Recreation and Trails resource:

Timber Harvest, Prescribed Burning, and Associated Activities

Timber management projects may affect the Recreation and Trails resource by restricting access to National Forest System roads and trails, as well as areas, on a short-term or long-term basis, preventing visitors from accessing trailheads, driving for pleasure, utilizing developed recreation sites and dispersed campsites, and other activities. Additionally, timber harvest projects may include the placement of roads into long-term storage or their decommissioning, which would prevent access for recreation purposes on a long-term or permanent basis, respectively. Temporary to short-term road and trail closures can occur during prescribed burning operations due to smoke and/or flames, which pose safety concerns. Most prescribed burns occur during the spring, early summer, and early fall months; summer use of roads and trails would not typically be affected.

Closing routes to motorized use could result in displacement and concentration of use, as well as conflict of uses. Timber hauling associated with such projects can result in safety issues, as large trucks would be using the same roads as OHVs and motorcycles.

Several present and reasonably foreseeable projects listed in Appendix A to the FEIS will decommission, store, or close system roads and "undetermined" status roads. In the case of some "undetermined" status roads, they may be placed on the Forest's Transportation System if the project-specific travel analysis determines they are necessary for future management. The Darby Lumber Lands Watershed Improvement and Travel Management Project proposes to place approximately 55 miles of closed roads into long-term storage, and decommission an additional 66 miles of roads. The Three Saddle Vegetation Management project will decommission approximately 9.5 miles of road, and place about 1.1 miles of road in long-term storage. The Como Forest Health Protection Project will place approximately 3.1 miles of undetermined roads in long-term storage, and will decommission about 3.5 miles of undetermined roads. The Meadow Vapor project will be proposing to decommission and place roads in long-term storage. These activities could result in cumulative adverse effects to the Recreation and Trails resource, in association with the activities proposed in **Alternatives 1, 3, and 4**. These projects could open up forest canopy and may improve scenery and increase recreational access if routes are designated through the timber sale NEPA process.

Short term noise impacts to users may occur with the use of heavy machinery, motor vehicles, and power equipment. Timber harvest activities typically are site-specific, and do not tend to occur in the same general location at the same times. Because of the dispersed and temporal nature of these projects, combined effects are not very likely. In some cases, road construction and reconstruction work could be occurring concurrently with timber harvest, which would have an additive effect to the intensity of noise associated with a specific project. All of these projects tend to be temporal, with their effect to users typically lasting from several hours to several weeks or months.

Wildfire Suppression

Fire suppression activities can affect the recreation experience by restricting or closing access to National Forest System roads and trails, as well as areas, preventing their use for accessing trailheads, driving for pleasure, utilizing developed recreation sites and dispersed campsites, and other activities. Areas where fire camps are located also create areas of disturbance which may encourage dispersed camping or vehicle use where it has not occurred before.

Cattle Grazing

Cattle grazing can contribute to the unauthorized use of livestock trails by motorized vehicles. Cattle trails evident on the landscape are frequently used by single-track vehicles, which will follow a trail to see where it leads. These are often one-way routes which do not provide a loop opportunity. Use of these unauthorized routes by motorcycles can cause resource damage, depending upon the location, as they have not been designed for motorized use, lack drainage structures and proper trail surfacing, as well as not meeting grade requirements.

Road and Trail Management

Road and trail maintenance projects, such as blading, gate repair/replacement, cleaning ditches and culverts, brushing, and debris removal, and improvement projects, could result in short-term to long-term closures of National Forest System roads and trails, preventing visitors from accessing trailheads, driving for pleasure, utilizing developed recreation sites dispersed campsites, and other activities.

Activities on Private, State, and Federal Lands

Residential subdivision and commercial development along the Bitterroot National Forest boundary may increase unauthorized routes from private property into the Forest. Development of these lands would also restrict past uses ranging from parking, trail access, ski trails and cross county travel of many types because the use would change with the development of the land. Multiple existing trails start, pass through or end on private lands. Changes in land ownership could cause these trails to be difficult to keep open or access.

Timber harvest activities occurring on adjacent State and private lands could have an effect on recreation on Bitterroot National Forest System lands if routes have been created and not decommissioned, allowing motorized access onto the Forest where it may not have been designated prior.

Reductions or changes in motorized summer opportunities on adjacent National Forests, including the Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Lolo, Salmon-Challis, and Nez-Perce – Clearwater, could result in increased numbers of users on the Bitterroot National Forest, with effects including conflicts of uses, concentration of use, and displacement of users.

Wildfire

When a wildfire spreads through an area, it leaves openings in the forest, which can allow motorized vehicles to encroach into these areas. Also, during wildfires, recreation activities, such as driving for pleasure, firewood cutting, wildlife viewing, visiting developed recreation sites, and accessing trails for hiking, biking, camping, and riding ATVs, may be prohibited for safety reasons.

Natural Disturbance Events

Events such as floods, large wind events, and blizzards can create large areas of disturbance resulting in blocked trails or routes, drainage or erosion issues to trail treads, and hazardous conditions. Consequently, recreation activities, such as driving for pleasure, firewood cutting, wildlife viewing, visiting developed recreation sites, and accessing trails for hiking, biking, camping, and riding ATVs, may be prohibited for safety reasons.

Over-Snow

As many roads and trails would be snow covered during the winter months, this would limit their use by motorized vehicles, both by the public and Forest Service personnel. Subsequently, personal use firewood cutting and personal use Christmas Tree harvesting, as well as forest management activities, including road and trail management, and invasive plants management, would not occur. Cattle typically graze on allotments on National Forest System lands between 05/15 – 10/31; they would not be grazing during winter months.

Timber harvest projects to be implemented during the winter months may affect the Recreation and Trails resource by restricting access to National Forest System roads and trails, as well as areas, on a short-term or long-term basis, preventing visitors from accessing roads and trails. Closing routes to motorized use could result in displacement and concentration of use, as well as conflict of uses. Timber hauling associated with such projects can result in safety issues, as large trucks would be using the same roads as snowmobiles and skiers.

Reduced over-snow vehicle use opportunities on adjacent National Forests, including the Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Salmon-Challis, and Nez-Perce – Clearwater, could result in increased use on the Bitterroot National Forest, with associated effects including conflicts of uses, concentration, and displacement of users.

Cumulative Effects from the Implementation of the Alternatives

Alternative 1

Several of the above-listed present and reasonably foreseeable activities could result in cumulative effects to the Recreation and Trails resource during the summer months, in combination with the activities proposed in the Travel Management Planning Project; timber harvest projects could have cumulative effects on over-snow use.

Alternative 2

Several of the above-listed present and reasonably foreseeable activities could have cumulative effects on the Recreation and Trails resource during the summer months, in combination with the activities proposed in the Travel Management Planning Project; timber harvest projects could have cumulative effects on over-snow use.

Alternative 3

Several of the above-listed present and reasonably foreseeable activities could have cumulative effects on the Recreation and Trails resource during the summer months, in combination with the activities proposed in the Travel Management Planning Project; timber harvest projects could have cumulative effects on over-snow use.

Alternative 4

Several of the above listed present and reasonably foreseeable activities could have cumulative effects on the Recreation and Trails resource during the summer months, in combination with the activities proposed in the Travel Management Planning Project; timber harvest projects could have cumulative effects on over-snow use.

Cumulative Effects Finding

There could be cumulative effects to the Recreation and Trails resource from past, current, and reasonably foreseeable actions including timber harvest, prescribed burning, and associated activities; wildfire suppression; cattle grazing; road and trail management; and activities on private, state, and federal lands in association with the activities in **Alternatives 1, 2, 3,** and **4** during the summer months. There could be

cumulative effects from timber harvest projects and activities on private, state, and federal lands in combination with the activities proposed in **Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4** during the winter months.

3.2.5 CONSISTENCY WITH THE FOREST PLAN, LAWS, AND REGULATIONS

The Travel Management Planning Project is essentially a planning effort, and does not create new ground disturbance. As such, consistency with existing regulation is a matter of incorporating various concerns into the planning effort. This has been done in all phases of the project, and all alternatives would be consistent with the Forest Plan and other applicable laws and regulations.

A. Bitterroot National Forest Plan

Consistency with the Bitterroot National Forest Plan forest-wide resource and management area standards applicable to the Recreation and Trails resource would be accomplished as follows:

Forest-wide Management Standards

The following Forest-wide standards are applicable to the Recreation resource:

The Forest Travel Plan will be reviewed annually and revisions made to meet Forest plan management direction. Off-road vehicle (ORV) use decisions will be incorporated into the Forest Plan as amendments. The Montana Fish and Game Commission Road Management Policy will be considered in the annual Travel Planning process (USDA Forest Service 1987a, II-18).

How Addressed:

The Forest's Travel Plan is reviewed each time a new project is initiated on the Forest. Off-road vehicle decisions, such as the 2001 Tri-State Decision, which prohibited motorized wheeled travel on unauthorized routes established following the decision, amend the Bitterroot National Forest Plan.

The priority for trail reconstruction and relocation will be based on public safety, resource damage, and type of use (USDA Forest Service 1987a, II-18).

How Addressed:

Trails proposed for reconstruction and relocation will be subject to separate NEPA analysis and decisions. The environmental documents associated with individual, site-specific projects will address public safety, resource damage, and the type of use allowed.

Off-road vehicle use will be controlled to prevent soil degradation (USDA Forest Service 1987a, II-18).

How Addressed:

Off-road vehicle use would be limited to motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping within corridors up to a specified distance off both sides of the center line of designated routes. Corridors would be extended to those sites identified on the maps of the alternatives. Motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping would be prohibited within 30 feet of any flowing stream, pond, lake, marsh, or wetland to protect sensitive soils.

Use of dispersed campsites and their access routes would be monitored. When adverse impacts are noted, appropriate actions such as restricting or eliminating access and rehabilitating sites will occur.

1. Using the ability to change forest priorities to increase law enforcement patrols to provide education and information to the public,
2. Providing a clear and easy to understand MVUM and OSVUM
3. Educating the public to the need to carry and use the MVUM and the OSVUM
4. Improving trail signing and showing travel restrictions, and
5. Utilizing all forest personnel to help educate visitors on travel management rules and regulations

Management Area (MA) Standards

The following MA standards are applicable to the Recreation resource:

Management Areas (MA) 1 and 2

Manage for recreation activities associated with roads and motorized equipment. The recreation opportunity spectrum setting is roaded natural (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-3).

How Addressed:

The recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) for MAs 1 and 2 was reviewed, and it was determined it would not change with **any alternative**. MAs 1 and 2 would continue to be managed as roaded natural. Recreation activities are managed for motorized roads and equipment.

Management Areas (MA) 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 5 and 8a

Pending resolution by Congress, that portion of the management area within the boundary of Montana Wilderness Study Act [MWSA] areas will be administered according to the goals and standards established for MA 6 (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-3, 9, 16, 23, 37, and 58).

How Addressed:

Alternatives 1 and 4 propose changes to the motorized/mechanical transport use activities permitted to occur during the summer and winter within the Blue Joint and Sapphire WSA areas in order to be consistent with the Montana Wilderness Study Act.

Management Area 3a

Manage to provide recreation opportunities associated with main access roads and fishing streams. The recreation opportunity spectrum is roaded natural (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-16).

How Addressed:

The ROS for MA 3a was reviewed, and it was determined it would not change with **any alternative**. MA 3a would continue to be managed as roaded natural. Recreation activities are associated with main access roads and fishing streams.

Management Area 3b

The recreation opportunity spectrum setting is "roaded natural "except for small unroaded areas associated with the steep slopes of Management Area 3a (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-23).

How Addressed:

The ROS for MA 3b was reviewed, and it was determined that the setting of roaded natural would not change with **any alternative**. MA 3b would continue to be managed as roaded natural.

Management Areas 3a and 8b

Off-road vehicle use will be restricted/controlled during critical periods on susceptible ranges such as high-use winter range, spring range, and densely roaded fall range (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-16 and 61).

How Addressed:

Off-road vehicle use would be limited to motorized wheeled access for dispersed camping within corridors up to a specified distance off both sides of the center line of designated routes. Corridors would be extended to those sites identified on the maps of the alternatives.

Off-road vehicle use, with the exception for accessing dispersed campsites, was prohibited by the 2001 Tri-State Decision, which amended the Bitterroot National Forest Plan. Motorized access for dispersed camping is proposed within 150 and 300 feet from either side of the centerline of a designated route,

depending upon the alternative; access to 27 identified sites located at distances greater than 150 feet in **Alternative 4**, and 20 identified sites located at 300 feet in **Alternatives 1, 2, and 3**.

Over-snow use was restricted in critical winter range area for mountain goats. In **Alternative 1**, areas of identified goat winter range proposed to be closed to over-snow vehicle use in the Sapphires are in the northern part of the Stony Mountain IRA, the adjacent Palisade Mountain area, and two faces along the southern edge of the Sapphire WSA in the Moose Creek and Sign Creek drainages.

Alternative 4 would prohibit snowmobile access in all of the identified goat winter range in the Stony Mountain IRA, and the Allan Mountain IRA. It would also prohibit snowmobile access in identified goat winter range in the Palisade Mountain area, and the Moose Creek and Sign Creek areas near the southern edge of the Sapphire WSA.

Management Area 3c

The recreation opportunity spectrum setting is roaded natural; however, portions will not be roaded because of visual, soil and water constraints (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-30).

How Addressed:

The ROS for MA 3c was reviewed, and it was determined it would not change with **any alternative**. MA 3c would continue to be managed as roaded natural.

Management Area 5

Manage for recreation activities associated with roadless areas, including hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, motor-biking, and snowmobiling. Provide campground facilities in high-use areas to protect soil and water resources and maintain recreation values (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-37).

How Addressed:

Each alternative offers a variety of roads, trails, and areas available for motorized and nonmotorized use. The Travel Plan will identify the areas, trails and roads open for motorized vehicle use, the types of vehicles that are permitted, and the seasons of use. The screening process was used to address wildlife, adjacent wilderness, soil and water resources, and public safety. Motorized use will not be permitted where wildlife, adjacent wilderness, soil and water resources or public safety are threatened (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-37).

The recreation opportunity spectrum setting is semi primitive motorized and nonmotorized (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-37).

How Addressed:

The ROS for MA 5 was reviewed, and it was determined it would not change with **any alternative**. MA 5 would continue to be managed as semi primitive motorized and nonmotorized.

Trails will be compatible with the semi-primitive setting. Some trails will be constructed or reconstructed to accommodate off-road vehicle use (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-37).

How Addressed:

Trails are compatible with the ROS semi primitive setting in MA 5. Any reconstruction or construction will meet the semi primitive setting, but would be authorized under a separate NEPA analysis and decision document.

The Lost Horse, Nezperce, Deer Creek, Burnt Fork, Roaring Lion, Canyon Creek, and Saddle Mountain roads will be managed to provide recreation access (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-37).

How Addressed:

All of these roads would remain open to motorized vehicles in the **all alternatives** in the Travel Management Planning Project to provide recreation access.

Management Area 6

Maintain existing primitive and semi primitive settings. Manage the area essentially free from evidence of human restrictions and controls (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-41).

How Addressed:

The ROS was reviewed, and it was determined that the primitive and semi primitive settings would not be changed with **any alternative** with this travel management planning process.

Continue current uses which do not detract from wilderness values. Transitory uses such as chainsaws, trail bikes and snowmobiles are appropriate if permitted by the Forest's Travel Plan (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-41).

How Addressed:

Under **Alternatives 1 and 4**, motorized/mechanical transport use, including motorcycles, bicycles, and snowmobiles, would not be permitted in recommended wilderness areas.

Management Area 8a

Manage for ROS setting and recreation activities associated with adjacent management areas (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-58).

How Addressed:

The ROS for MA 8a was reviewed, and it was determined it would not change with **any alternative**. MA 8a would continue to be managed consistent with adjacent management areas.

Maintain trails and roads that pass through these units for recreation use unless closure is required to meet other resource standards (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-58).

How Addressed:

Each alternative offers a variety of roads and trails which provide access for recreation, both motorized and nonmotorized.

Management Area 8b

Manage for ROS settings and recreation activities associated with adjacent management areas (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-61).

How Addressed:

The ROS for MA 8b was reviewed, and it was determined it would not change with **any alternative**. MA 8b would continue to be managed consistent with adjacent management areas.

Management Area 9

The recreation opportunity setting is defined by the adjacent management area (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-66).

How Addressed:

The ROS for MA 9 was reviewed, and it was determined it would not change with **any alternative**. MA 9 would continue to be managed consistent with adjacent management areas.

Management Area 10

Existing facilities will be rehabilitated to protect riparian zones from human impact (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-69).

How Addressed:

There are motorized vehicle routes to dispersed camping areas that have received historic use with minimal impacts. However, there have been motorized vehicle routes created to some dispersed campsites that have resulted in resource damage to vegetation, soil, fisheries, and water resources along the Lost Horse Corridor, and along Skalkaho and Skalkaho Rye Creek. In some cases, it is the motorized vehicle use to the site that has caused resource damage; in other cases; it is the dispersed camping activity that has caused resource damage. Resource damage can be minimized by hardening the access route and parking area with gravel, or defining the parking area with large boulders. Motorized vehicle use to dispersed campsites along the Lost Horse Corridor has been defined with large boulders and hardened with gravel parking areas to minimize stream bank erosion from vehicles parking too close to the Creek. Dispersed camp sites along Skalkaho and Skalkaho Rye Creek have also been mitigated by placing large boulders and defining parking areas to keep vehicles off the stream bank. This mitigation activity has minimized resource concerns while allowing the public to enjoy these areas.

Management Area 11a

Manage for semi primitive motorized use (USDA Forest Service 1987a, III-74).

How Addressed:

The ROS for MA 11a was reviewed, and it was determined it would not change with **any alternative**. MA 11a would continue to be managed for semi primitive motorized use.

There are no Forest wide standards applicable to the Trail resource.

3.2.6 CHANGES BETWEEN DRAFT EIS AND FINAL EIS

- Minor grammatical edits were made to correct typographical errors and to improve readability
- Section 3.2 Recreation and Trails was modified to describe the benefits of recreation, including the use of motorized vehicles
- Section 3.2.1 (Scope of the Analysis and Analysis Methods). The first paragraph was changed from "The Analysis Area for Recreation and Trails resource is the entire Bitterroot National Forest" to "The project area for the Travel Management Planning Project is the portion of the Forest outside of Designated Wilderness"
- Section 3.2.2 D (Travel Management Direction) was rewritten to improve clarity and organization, and to provide additional information
- Section 3.2.3 B (Bitterroot National Forest Recreation Use Information) was rewritten to provide additional information. Table 3.2-1 was added
- Section 3.2.3 F (Motorized Vehicle Use for Dispersed Camping) was rewritten to improve clarity and organization, and to provide additional information
- Section 3.2.3 H (National Forest Trail System) was rewritten to improve clarity and organization, and to provide information on trail operations, maintenance, and improvements. Tables 3.2-2, 3.2-3, and 3.2-4 were added.
- Section 3.2.3 I (Funding for Operations, Maintenance, and Improvements was added to provided additional information. Tables 3.2-6 and 3.2-7 were added. This was done in response to comments on the DEIS.
- Section 3.2.3 J (Motorized Use) was rewritten to improve clarity and organization. Table 3.2-8 was added.
- Section 3.2.3 K (Coincident Routes) was added to provide additional information
- Section 3.2.3 L (Utility Vehicle Motorized Use) was added to provide additional information

- Section 3.2.3 M (Current Regulations for Motorized Trails) was added to provide additional information
- Section 3.2.3 O (Mechanical Transport) was added to provide additional information
- Section 3.2.3 P (Nonmotorized Summer Use on System Trails). The title for Figure 2.1-1 was changed, and additional data for the years 2009 -2011 was added
- Section 3.2.3 Q (Special Emphasis Trails) was rewritten to provide clarity and organization. Table 3.2-9 was added.
- Section 3.2.3 R (Over-Snow Use) was rewritten to provide clarity and organization, and to provide additional information
- Section 3.2.3 S (Noise) was rewritten to provide clarity and organization
- Section 3.2.3 T (Conflicts of Uses on National Forest System Roads, Trails, and Lands) was moved from C (Recreation Setting) to T, and rewritten to improve clarity and organization
- Section 3.2.3 U (Law Enforcement and Education) was rewritten to improve clarity and organization. The table was deleted; a table showing the number of violations associated with travel management is located in the Project File {Project File document REC-057.pdf}. This was done in response to comments on the DEIS
- Section 3.2.4 A (Environmental Consequences-Summer) was rewritten to improve clarity and organization. Table 3.2-10 was expanded to include information on Acres of ROS by Setting, and edited to reflect changes; Table 3.2-11 was added. Information pertaining to Budget and Affordability, including Table 3.2-12, was added to provide additional information. This was done in response to comments on the DEIS
- Section 3.2.4 B (Environmental Consequences – Over Snow) was rewritten to improve clarity and organization. Table 3.2-13 was added
- Section 3.2.3 E (Direct and Indirect Effects – Summer and Over-Snow) was rewritten to improve clarity and organization. Tables 3.2-14, 3.2-15, 3.2-16, 3.2-17, 3.2-18, 3.2-19, 3.2-20, and 3.2-21 were added.
- Section 3.2.3 F (Cumulative Effects). Effects associated with over-snow vehicle use were added.
- Section 3.2.5 (Consistency with Forest Plan, Laws, and Regulations) was rewritten to provide clarity and organization, as well as additional information